

Elementary English

KURT WIESE
SCOPE AND SEQUENCE
PARENTS' VIEWS OF READING
PICTURE-STORY BOOKS

★
ORGAN OF THE
NATIONAL
COUNCIL
OF
TEACHERS
OF
ENGLISH
★



From Kurt Wiese,

APRIL,
1956

Elementary ENGLISH

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CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

By Way of Introduction . . .

Although most of Kurt Wiese's work has been devoted to illustrating for other authors, Miss JEAN DE SALES BERTRAM has placed major emphasis in her article about him on books of which he is both author and illustrator. Miss Bertram, incidentally, has to date taught thirty classes in Children's Literature and Creative Dramatics.

MRS. LUELLA B. COOK, currently President of the National Council of Teachers of English, is director of language arts in the Minneapolis public schools. She has long been a leader in Council affairs, and has made many fine contributions to the literature on the teaching of English.

After all the furore about whether Johnny can read, it is refreshing to have NANCY LARRICK's factual discussion of parents' attitudes toward the problem. Miss Larrick is president-elect of the newly formed International Reading Association.

The list of picture-story books by JANET L. MILLER is classified according to the themes which most interest young children. It is a valuable addition to the many useful booklists now available to teachers.

The real basis of good English usage is found in speech. HAVERLY O. MOYER effectively shows the role of ear-training in developing proficiency in the use of

language.

The teaching of creative writing, while a difficult art, is one of the most delightful of all of the tasks of the teacher of English. ERIC M. STEEL, HAZEL WARD HOFFMAN, and VIRGINIA MACAGNONI present workable ideas for getting the boys and girls started.

MRS. MARTHA L. WILLSON's article on children's writing formed the framework for a talk which she gave to the Elementary Curriculum Council of the Hillsborough County Schools in Tampa, Florida. Her great interest in children's writing began when she taught in the schools of Greenville, S. C. She credits James B. Tippet, curriculum director, and Leland B. Jacobs of Teachers College, Columbia, with strengthening her belief in the creative capacities of children.

EDWARD STONE reports that he received his initial education and experience in California. He will be associated with the Harvard-Newton program this summer as a Master Teacher.

"The three essentials of both adult and juvenile biography," declares Gaither McConnell, "are truth, individuality, and art." Teachers who are aware of the value of biography in children's reading will appreciate his scholarly exposition of the subject.

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No. 4

JEAN DE SALES BERTRAM

Kurt Wiese—Prolific Artist, Author

"Why do they do that, Patriarch?" he said.

"They can't help it," the Patriarch told him; "it is the way of Gnats."

Behold the simplicity and wisdom of the old Frog's answer to the young Newt, who, eager and full of questions, called attention to "a cloud of Gnats performing an air dance in the sun."¹

To the young reader or student questioning us about Kurt Wiese's prolificacy (he has illustrated over 200 children's books) and variety in art techniques, there is but one answer and that as simple as Patriarch's observation: He can't help it. It is the way of Kurt Wiese to work with marked rapidity but with loving attention to details; to pass quickly from one book to another, always experimenting, always searching for some diversity of style and technique which is appro-

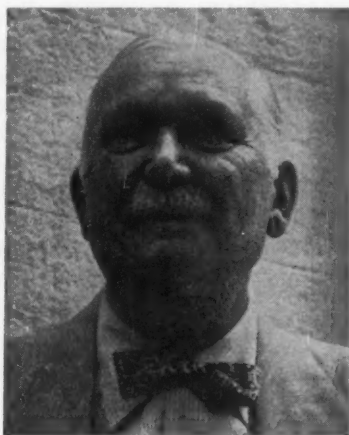
priate to the individual text but which discourages any charges of his fathering "look alikes" in the multifarious volumes bearing the inscription on the title page—Kurt Wiese, Illustrator.

Had he not been held as a prisoner of war, Mr. Wiese might never have become an artist. His story reads like a page from the life of Paganini who, according to legend, utilized a period of incarceration to practice on a one-string violin and so developed the virtuosity that immortalized him. For Wiese utilized his five years of imprisonment to discover and develop a talent for drawing.

A native of Minden, in Northern Germany, where becoming an artist was "something unheard of," young Kurt was sent to Hamburg to prepare for the export trade to China. He describes his training and the events precipitating his capture in these words:

¹Alice Crew Gall and Fleming H. Crew, *Wagtail*, (Illustrated by Kurt Wiese), page 12. New York: Oxford University Press, 1932.

Miss Bertram is at present teaching at San Francisco State College.



Kurt Wiese

After being able to count the threads of a ten-schilling shirt just by feeling it with my hands, I was sent out to China. I arrived there at the time of a revolution, but I spent the next six years traveling and selling merchandise until the war with Japan broke out. Captured by the Japanese and handed over to the British, I was sent to Australia and lived for five years in the Australian bush as a prisoner of war. These years gave me the courage to throw the Chinese trade into the Australian dust and do the thing I wanted to do. Thus I began to draw.²

The landscape and animals of Australia impressed him so keenly that he began both to draw and to write about that country. From the Australian experiences have come two picture books of which he is the author-illustrator—*Karoo, the Kangaroo* (1929) and *Buddy, the Bear* (1941). Any small child who has been



Go West Young Bear

lost in a crowd or frightened by separation from Mother or Daddy may well empathize with little Karoo, who, unable to keep up with the herd as they flee from attacking dingoes (wild dogs), is lost in the tall grasses. From this point the simple

²Kurt Wiese, statement for "Brief Biographies" in Mahoney, Bertha E. et. al., compilers, *Illustrators of Children's Books, 1744-1945*, Boston: The Horn Book, Inc., 1947, page 372.

narrative is concerned solely with Karoo's efforts to find his mother. Across the plains, through the forest, and due east to the desert, Karoo searches, pausing in turn to ask Kaola, Ant-eater, Duck's Bill, Kiwi, and Kookaburra if they have seen the herd. The reunion with his mother is accomplished happily, but not without Karoo's development of independence and self-reliance. The illustrations, though authentic in presentation of animals and countryside of Australia, do not inspire the imagination and wonder achieved by his work in *Buddy, the Bear*.

One of the charms of this story of a koala and her little son Buddy is that the sketches are somewhat analogous to the child's own drawings. Their primitive quality, the rough crayon marks, the simplicity of each drawing with a minimum of detail combine to give the young child a feeling that a close friend has illustrated this book especially for him. Text and drawings are fairly balanced in the simplicity of treatment and in the correlation of illustrations and story line. In the twelve years between *Karoo* and *Buddy*, Mr. Wiese has seen the value of minimizing detail in picture books for the very young. Actually in *Buddy*, more than in most of his other works, the lines suggest and thereby stimulate the child's imagination and visual perception. When this sense of wonder is kept alive, our children continue to develop aesthetic and creative qualities.

The plot line in *Buddy* concerns three attempts by him and his mother to pass from one eucalyptus tree to another in search of juicy leaves during a dry season. In each effort they are foiled by a wombat

and dingoes until their friends, the white cockatoos, literally pester away the wombat through incessant screaming. The element of suspense is kept at a level suitable for the very young who identify so easily and completely with the leading character, be he boy, koala, or the train who thought he could.

Returning to Germany in 1919, Wiese was delighted to find a publisher so interested in his work that it was financially possible to devote all his time to writing and drawing, giving up forever his export activities in the Orient. But this man with the "amazing visual memory,"³ as May Massee has phrased it, was destined to draw upon that experience in China for the next thirty-seven years, and he will probably continue to draw on it as long as he illustrates children's books.

Meanwhile, a film company engaged him to design what Wiese himself called "exotic backgrounds." This art work, however, was not to influence his future so much as his association with the founder of the film company, who was already

had always been fond of animals, and now with so many new opportunities to observe them firsthand, his sketchbook grew and grew with studies of all kinds of animals. It is not surprising, therefore, that he should give us a story like *The Rabbits' Revenge* (1940). After being informed that Old Man Shivers intends to "shoot every rabbit alive" for a suit of rabbits' fur, the rabbits organize themselves, make a truce with their enemies, and begin to dig a tunnel all around Old Man Shivers' house:

Then they gave a sign to the rain man who came down from his mountain bringing the rain. It simply poured! They signalled to the beaver who opened the dam. All the water rushed into the tunnel. . . .

Soon the water that came out of the ground underneath the house began to lift it and the house started to topple over. . . . The house began to sway and rock and finally to move! The clever rabbits lined up on the bank of the river to watch Old Man Shivers as he floated away.

"There he goes! There goes Old Man Shivers!" they shouted in glee.

In the end Old Man Shivers chatters: "R-r-rabbits! I w-wouldn't g-go near them.



The Rabbits' Revenge

one of the world's outstanding animal dealers—Hagenbeck of Hamburg. Wiese

N-n-No sir! I th-think I'll buy a w-w-woolen suit."

³May Massee, "Developments of the Twentieth Century," in Mahoney, *op. cit.*, page 244.

The simple sketches are effectively done in black and white with green over-

tones. Humorous treatment is given especially to Old Man Shivers and the rain man. Shivers represents no "look alike" to any other Wiese character, but the broad humor seen here perhaps foreshadows Wiese's delightful work for Phil Stong, epitomized in his drawings for *Honk: the Moose* (1946).

Though he has been successful in maintaining variety in his work, there are two media in which Wiese most enjoys working. One is his Chinese brushes, and the other is lithography. In lithography, Wiese prefers to make his own plates and now regrets that union shops will no longer accept plates on which the artist has worked at home.⁴ No detail is too small for his complete attention and consideration. The old blacksmith's shop converted to a studio behind his farmhouse in Frenchtown, New Jersey, formerly bore rich evidence of his own lithographing directly on the stone.

To illustrate his attention to small but important detail work, one need only know of his service to Ludwig Bemelmans. Now it has been said of Bemelmans that he is "an artist by inspiration and not by craftsmanship. He works hard, will make thirty drawings and throw them all away when he finally gets the right one. But analyze his drawings, the craft of separating his work into four colors and their combinations—that he cannot do and will not try."⁵ Such was the case in his illustrations for *Hansi*. Because Wiese is a good friend to Bemelmans and because he was loath to see *Hansi* not reach the presses, he volunteered to separate the

colors in every drawing and copy them on zinc plates. Through his patient efforts, his friend's work has come alive for others to enjoy. Bemelmans had been born only eleven years after Wiese in neighboring Austria, but it had remained for their paths to cross in America before the friendship flourished.

Post World-War I days in Germany were short-lived for Wiese, for after three years, he writes, his publisher "gave up when the gold mark came back, and as I had no coal for the winter and a strong desire to live under a warm sun and a régime of paper money, I left for Brazil."⁶ More travel, another revolution, illustrating for a noted Brazilian writer, preparing newspaper cartoons and a children's page—these occupied Wiese for three more years. From this period he gathered material for *The Parrot Dealer* which he did not bring out until, leaving the sun and palm trees of Brazil, he set out for a new adventure in a country which greeted him in the late twenties with "snow flurries [sweeping] along the gray skyline of Manhattan."⁷

One of his early books in the United States was *The Chinese Ink Stick* (1929). Like Rachel Field's inanimate but almost human Hitty, the ink stick has various adventures related as if seen through its eyes. This ink stick introduces the reader to customs, games, dress, holidays, etc., in China. But unlike *Hitty* there is no element of suspense to hold the child's interest. The drawings are authentic and valu-

⁴Wiese, *loc. cit.*

⁵*Publishers' Weekly*, 158, (Oct. 28, 1950), page 1925.

⁶May Massee, in Mahoney, *op. cit.*, page 243.

⁷Stanley J. Kunitz and Howard Haycraft, editors, *The Junior Book of Authors*, second edition, revised, New York: The H. W. Wilson Co., 1951, page 299.

able in a study of China, but the book's appeal for the child rests there.

A happier adventure for Wiese came when he was asked to do the illustrations for Felix Salten's *Bambi*. Already the type had been set, and the galley proofs were being read. No illustrations had been planned for the edition. The sudden decision to commission Kurt Wiese for illustrations meant that the book had to be reset. Results justified the time and expense. Since then through arrangements with Simon and Schuster, Grosset and Dunlap has issued an edition printed from the original plates. The illustrations feature closeups of the animals and are done in soft sepia tone. These capture the feeling for *Bambi* far more than Wiese's drawings for Grosset and Dunlap's Thrushwood edition of the book. By 1931 Wiese's reputation as a children's illustrator was well established in America.

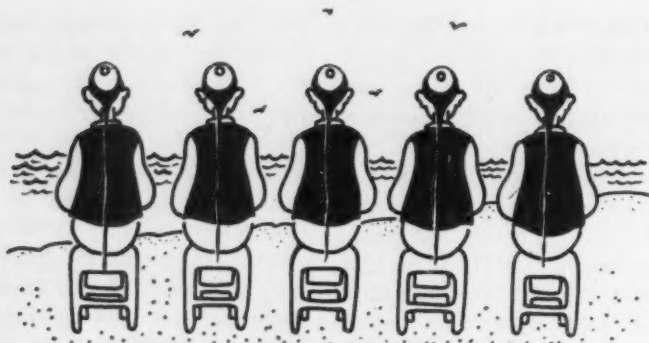
In 1932 he brought out *The Parrot Dealer*. This appears to be his last full-length novel for children. The writing, like his memory, abounds in detail. The descriptions in *The Parrot Dealer* are developed at the sacrifice of effective characterization and well-knit, interesting plot. To this reviewer it seems a wise turn of events that led Wiese largely into the field of illustrating, or at least into author-illustrator projects in which he turned his attention to picture books for the very young.

The man's work is so varied and so voluminous that the confines of this article do not permit treatment of his work beyond a few pertinent observations about his activity as an illustrator for other authors. Remember his travels have led him through Russia, across Siberia, along

the Gobi desert, through Manchuria and China, through the islands of the South Sea to Australia, thence again to Europe via Africa, and later to South America and on up to North America. He was in each spot long enough to know it well, and with such a background we understand why he was sought after to do the series for A. Whitman and Company on Bolivia, Ecuador, Greenland, Honduras, Peru, Venezuela, Colorado, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, North Carolina, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Texas with Bernadine Freeman Bailey as the author; on Colombia, Guiana, Newfoundland, and Paraguay with Lois Donaldson doing the copy; on Alaska, Argentina, Australia, the Bahamas, Bermuda, Brazil, British Honduras, Canada, Dominican Republic, Hawaii, Mexico, New Zealand, Panama, Virgin Islands, and the West Indies in cooperation with Marguerite Henry.

His experience in China was called into play again in 1932, when he was chosen to illustrate *Young Fu of the Upper Yangtze* by Elizabeth Foreman Lewis, which won the Newbery award for that year. Though he himself seems to be happiest with his drawings for *Aesop's Fables* in 1950,⁸ mention must be made of his two picture books which may well become classics for the little folk—*The Story about Ping* (1933) by Marjorie Flack and *The Five Chinese Brothers* (1938) done in collaboration with Claire Huchet Bishop. What child has not widened his eyes and perhaps even clapped his hands in glee at sight of the third Chinese brother who "began to stretch

⁸*Publishers' Weekly*, op. cit., page 1924.

*The Five Chinese Brothers*

and stretch and stretch his legs, way down to the bottom of the sea"? In my experience with little ones, this is the illustration which will serve most to preserve Kurt Wiese's name among the illustrators of children's books.

The simplicity of the tale is matched by that of the illustrations—simple, bold lines so appealing to the very young. Color is judiciously used. The movement of the illustrations from page to page sweeps the reader on, not halting us as in *The Rabbit's Revenge* when the crow, leading the rabbits in a line facing back to the beginning of the book, temporarily stays the reader from pressing forward to the end. Just a few curling lines around the big oven are enough to suggest the scorching heat that makes little people fan themselves as the fifth Chinese brother goes in and comes out.

Wiese's honors have included an award from the *Exposition D'Arts et Techniques* at the Paris World's Fair in 1937 for *Yin Ka Tu, the Yak*.⁹ It was the British publisher for Viking Press who exhibited the book at the Fair.

Settled at last after all his wanderings, Kurt Wiese says:

It seems hard for me to believe that I have not lived here [in the United States] all my life. The older generation shared with me the experiences of their life and that of their fathers; the younger generation goes to a school, which is the house next to ours. They are daily visitors at my studio. They come to see my work and to bring me the things they have found and that they think might be of interest to me. Pictures of the past have become crystal clear, and past and present seem to unite in a happy background.¹⁰

⁹*Ibid.*, page 1925.

¹⁰Kunitz, *loc. cit.*

Scope and Sequence in the School Program

Interpreted by Classroom Procedures

Often when I have returned from my travels to distant lands or to different parts of the country, the small fry in my family ask, Which country did you like *best*? What city was the *most* interesting? And when I counter by saying I liked them all, for different reasons, they are for the moment disappointed; I have put their minds to a difficult test; I have asked them to hold several ideas in mind at the same time in some sort of balanced relationship. And this, admittedly, is a feat.

As adults we often revert to this particular kind of immature thinking, and even educators are not immune to it. Indeed, we seem to me to have a penchant for setting up those false dichotomies which ask us to choose between one or the other of two equally valid, but different, claims. We slip easily into championing *either* form or content, for example, when we discuss literature; or, we line up *either* with the individual or with the group; and we tend to support *either* a kind of laissez-faire freedom or a rigid conformity to established convention. We find it difficult to accept *both* concepts, in right relation to each other. There is no real conflict between form and content, nor between freedom and conformity, nor between the individual and the group, except in a particular situation, where the problem of relationship to a particular set of facts enters in. There are values on both sides of this fictitious fence, too important to be lost sight of in partisan argument.

Lurking behind the title of this article

are a number of these complicated relationships which have somehow been distorted and set in false opposition to each other. There is the question of over-all planning *versus* day-to-day planning, so as to capitalize directly on each day's particular experience. There is the question of who is better able to judge the needs of particular pupils: their own teacher, or a committee of so-called curriculum experts, far removed from the classroom. And there is the old battle between the "teacher of the child" and the "teacher of the subject," still going on—though with diminishing intensity.

In none of these instances is the conflict real. In each one the problem is that of recognizing *when, where, how, to whom, and for what* and *to what degree, both* sets of values apply.

As I see it, the organization of teaching resources is a kind of delicate counterpoint: the skillful interweaving of at least two different melodies into a single harmony.

I am thinking, for example, of all that we have learned over the past few decades about child growth and development. That's one melody, and a wonderful melody it is. But within those very same decades we have also increased our knowledge of the processes of communication and appreciation. The modern linguist, the semanticist, the psychologist, the literary artist have all been exploring and cultivating new frontiers of knowledge and

Mrs. Cook is President of the National Council of Teachers of English.

insight. Our subject field, too, looms large on the horizon of this atomic age, and is as important in its way as nuclear energy is in its. Not only do we know much more than we used to about how children learn language, but about what there is about language that it's important to learn. We know that language development is a vital part of the growing personality. We know that literature is a great social force. And we know that the very survival of democracy depends on our ability to improve, not only the mechanisms of communication, but the power to communicate.

As teachers we have a *dual* responsibility: to the child, to see that he has a fair chance to develop up to his capacity; to society, to see that the discoveries of science and the insights of art in the field of language are utilized, not only in the interests of the individual, but in the interests of the group.

All this calls for increased knowledge on our part—increased knowledge on two important fronts; but it calls also for the skillful integration of these two kinds of knowledge in our teaching plans.

Our whole concept of child development, furthermore, makes it clear that we cannot, as individual teachers, do the job alone. Each child in our classroom is but temporarily in our charge. While we share the responsibility for his development, at no time is that responsibility ours alone. It is therefore important that teachers of all grades plan together, so that learning may be cumulative from grade to grade, from level to level. But this is easier said than done, and the chief difficulty, I think, lies in a confusion about the problems of organization. We have outgrown one

concept and not fully achieved another.

To those who are thoroughly familiar with the facts about child growth and development, for example, the old concept of a flight of stairs, up which all pupils climbed to graduation one grade at a time, no longer serves. The picture no longer fits the facts. Children just do not develop in such orderly fashion.

And to those others who are keenly aware of all the child eventually should learn about language, if he is to communicate well as an adult, the logical outline of subject matter to be covered within a span of time, seems indispensable, if language learning is not to become haphazard and accidental.

Here is another one of those false dichotomies to which I referred at the outset of this address. Pitted against one another are those who put their faith in the psychological outline, based on the way pupils learn, and those who put theirs in the logical outline, based on what is to be learned. There is no real choice between them; both are important tools for different purposes, and the central problem is to recognize that difference and to use both at different times and in different places, for different purposes.

I like to think of the job-to-be-done as a great arterial highway over which cars of varied size and power travel at different speeds to different destinations. Some go far along that highway; others, only a short distance. Some cars stall; some perhaps, are wrecked. Some go fast; others go slowly. Although the occupants respond differently to the sights along the way, all cars travel the same road.

I use this picture to call your attention

to what in the teaching situation remains more or less constant and what in the situation has a right to be constantly varying. I believe much of our frustration in teaching would vanish if we were clear on this point. It is easy to fix our attention on the shifting lines of moving traffic and—to parody a familiar proverb—fail to see the highway for the cars. Those who know the highway best are not unduly disturbed by stalled cars, or by short runs. They know that language learning is not only *by degrees*, but *to a degree*, and they can recognize in crude beginnings the promise of growing power.

The point I am making is that we need not only to look at the immediate needs of the child; we need also to look at the highway along which he will be traveling, no matter how far. That highway stands for all that is known about language and literature and the processes of communication. It is our "subject," if you please; it is *what* we teach to children. And that highway does not end at the point which the average pupil, or the average teacher, can reach. It is the pupil, not the highway, that stops. The highway itself goes on to distant horizons, beyond even our own immediate reach.

I offer this concept as an antidote to myopic vision: the tendency to set as limits to our effort what the majority of pupils *can do*, as measured by tests of what they *have done*, rather than what they *might do*, if the possibilities for development were opened up to them.

Elementary teachers, too, must know the road, as well as they know children, so that they may help in the planning of that long journey which begins in kindergarten but continues on into the junior

high school, senior high school, perhaps college, and beyond. This long journey, as I see it, is the "scope and sequence" referred to in my title. It is what we expect to accomplish *together* in pupil development in the language arts.

It is usually represented on paper as a listing of major goals or teaching responsibilities. Such goals, by the very nature of language learning, must be the same for all grade levels, although the methods and materials used for helping pupils move toward these goals will obviously be different at the various levels. And it will be understood that the attainment of such goals must always be relative.

One may still hear teachers at all grade levels complain that their pupils don't "even know what a sentence is." Behind this complaint lies the assumption that here is the kind of goal that can be definitely placed at a particular grade level. Yet Thoreau put the mastery of the sentence as the goal of a lifetime. As our thoughts mature, our sentences grow more difficult to manage. Mastering the sentence, like woman's work, is never done.

In what terms, then, shall we define our goals, if they are to be the same for all levels? Let me illustrate the answer to my own question. Here as I see it are six major responsibilities which teachers of language arts should assume together. If you altered their construction a bit, you might also call them desired outcomes of twelve-or fourteen-years of schooling.

1. To awaken and sustain interest in language—man's greatest invention on which practically all others depend—and to acquaint pupils (at all age levels) with the part which language plays in personal and social development.

2. To assist pupils to develop skill in the use of language as a tool of thought; as a means of communication; as an expression of personality; as a social grace.
3. To introduce pupils to the common forms, customs, conventions which make for ease of communication.
4. To impart an essential knowledge of the nature and structure of language for purposes of self-help in the clarification of thought and in the use of socially acceptable forms.
5. To acquaint pupils with the common misuses of language which confuse real communication: the techniques of propaganda, etc.
6. To introduce pupils to the special function of literature and to the types of satisfaction it brings; to acquaint them with the various forms and techniques, a knowledge of which aids appreciation.

These are the kind of statements to be found in many teaching guides (although these particular ones do not so appear) as the over-all objectives of a language arts program, and one sometimes hears them contemptuously referred to as just words, "dreamed up" by the supervisory staff, as part of their job, but for the individual classroom teacher signifying nothing.

I wonder! I think they do have significance—a tremendous significance—for the individual classroom teacher, if as my title suggests, she can "interpret" them—relate them to her day-by-day procedure.

Here, briefly and incompletely charted, of course, is the *road*! It is not the journey. That still must be planned—but along this road. What learning experiences appropriate to kindergarten age or sixth grade level, would start children on their way toward a sustained appreciation of language as man's greatest invention, on which every other invention depends? How can elementary teachers build toward

that appreciation? Obviously the goal as stated is an adult concept for which children at the elementary level can only be made ready. *Readiness* is a word that elementary teachers understand very well in a different context. I believe it applies not only to the acquiring of specific skills but to the gaining of large understandings as well. I can see such a readiness program consisting of a great many indirect suggestions stemming from the teacher's own interest and delight in language. I can see it as imaginative play centering around the pretended situation that over night people lost their power of speech, or that over night all the books in the world disappeared: What would happen? I can see it in later grades as a "research" project about the supposed origin of language, and the different kinds of early writing that preceded the invention of the alphabet.

I believe such over-all objectives, or long-time goals, as I have indicated offer the individual classroom teacher a powerful stimulus to more effective planning of the term's work. Such goals, of course, must be broken down into more immediate objectives, and for these in turn there must be identified the kind of activities, appropriate to each growth level, that will lead to these desired outcomes. No one questions the value of learning through experience, but for maximum benefit learning experiences must be planned with definite ends in mind. It is at this point, I think, that the list of printed objectives, cooperatively built or agreed upon, offer the most help to the individual classroom teacher. They can be used both as goals and as instruments of evaluation. Take for example, the second teaching responsibility included in my

tentative list: *To assist pupils to develop skill in the use of language as a tool of thought; as a means of communication; as an expression of personality; as a social grace.* Here are four sharply different uses of language suggested. At your grade level, what *do* you do, or *could* you do, to help children discriminate more precisely in their thinking? Perhaps it is in vocabulary study, where you help them see the difference between the words *hue* and *shade* and *tint*.

Or, what *do* you do, or *could* you do, at your grade level to help pupils realize that language is a kind of behavior, and like our dress and our manners, has something to do with the way people accept us or reject us. At certain grade levels such a concept would never be consciously introduced at all, but the seeds for a later reaping would be planted, by the kind of language climate established in the classroom. The soft-spoken, unfailing courtesy of the teacher would be part of that climate. The discouragement of loud, rough talk would be another.

Each classroom teacher, reading through a list of objectives, such as those I just mentioned, should find not only clues for specific teaching but also hints for self-evaluation.

But there is still further use, as I see it, for such a list of objectives, carefully and thoughtfully prepared, or accepted, by a whole school faculty or a whole school system. They establish the total range, within which a particular learning sequence may be planned. For each of the objectives listed, there are not only types of language experiences appropriate to each of the three grade levels (elementary, junior, and senior high school) to be iden-

tified; there are also specific areas of subject matter to be similarly identified, as appropriately introduced at each level.

In curriculum construction, I know, there is the very real danger that we shall become preoccupied with high sounding objectives. But there is also the equally serious danger of becoming preoccupied with experience for its own sake. The problem we are faced with is a very old problem indeed. It is the problem of seeing the relationship between the part and the whole. We have talked much in recent decades about teaching the *whole* child. But the child grows up and becomes an adult in a world which, like the child, won't stay small. And so we have moved out upon a much wider arc and are trying to look at the problem whole and to see where within that larger whole we as individual teachers fit.

The classroom, I think, is still the province of the individual teacher, and the curriculum can never be any better than the interpretation which that teacher gives to it. But to say this is not to disparage the setting up of a school program—even a printed one; it is rather to emphasize the responsibility which the school program puts on each classroom teacher for an interpretation of that program which will result in a steady accumulation of essential learning.

What should be taught to children, I believe, should be cooperatively agreed upon. *How* it should be taught seems to me the prerogative of the individual teacher. I see the school program as a joint responsibility, binding us to one another in a shared responsibility.

Briefly, and in summary, the point that I would like to leave with you is that

we belong to a great profession which is much bigger and will last much longer than any one of us. To me there is something very sustaining in this thought, for in that thought I can dissolve all the temporary, personal frustrations that teaching the young is inevitably heir to. One of the very real satisfactions open to teachers is that of helping to build or to maintain through individual effort a sound

school program for *all* the children in the community. This kind of satisfaction is neither better nor worse than the satisfaction of watching a particular child's face light up with interest on a particular Monday morning, and seeing our own teaching efforts bear fruit; it is merely *different*—another kind of satisfaction to be won. I commend it to you, as one of the great rewards of our profession.

NANCY LARRICK

What Parents Think about Children's Reading

Parents are more concerned over the development of their children's interest in and enjoyment of reading than in the techniques of skill building, if we may judge by the responses of a selected group of parents interviewed recently. These were parents of intermediate-grade youngsters attending the public schools of a highly diversified community some forty miles from New York City. Trained interviewers visited them in their homes in an effort to determine the interests, questions, and perhaps anxieties that parents have about their children's reading.

Five public elementary schools participated in the project, furnishing the classroom registers of fourth, fifth, and sixth grades. From these lists, every eighth pupil was selected and his parent's name and address were recorded. The resulting random sample of 107 parents made up the roster of those visited and questioned about their children's reading.

Interviewers were selected from outside the survey community so as to minimize the possibility of influencing the responses. As a further means of encouraging frank discussion, parents were promised complete anonymity. Each interviewer recorded responses on a four-page mimeographed interview-questionnaire, but no record was kept of the name of the parent who had made any particular comments. Thus, parents were encouraged to speak freely without fear of any recrimination in the classroom.

Although each parent was selected because of one child in the intermediate grades, twenty-two percent had at least one other child in these grades as well. Naturally parents' comments and queries stemmed from their experience with all of their intermediate-grade children. Thus, while only 107 parents were

Miss Larrick is Education Director of Random House Children's Books.

interviewed, 132 intermediate-grade children were represented in the survey.

Four Main Areas Discussed

The questions and discussion during the interview were grouped around four main areas of interest concerning children's reading. First, each parent was asked which of the four was of the greatest concern to him. Because several parents expressed equal interest in two questions, the total number of choices was 125 from

the 107 parents interviewed. Their choices are shown on the following table:

Thus, sixty percent of the responses expressed interest in the questions of reading enjoyment and choice of reading materials, while forty percent stressed interest in development of reading skills. In the areas represented by these four questions parents were given the opportunity to make more detailed comments through several check lists and informal questions of opinion.

TABLE I.

	Number of Response	Percent of the 125 Responses
How is reading taught in school today?	24	19.2)
How can parents help their children learn to read better?	26) 40.0
		20.8)
How can parents help their children learn to enjoy reading more?	44	35.2)
) 60.0
What books and magazines should parents recommend to their children?	31)
		24.8)
	125	100.0

On Reading Enjoyment and Choice of Materials

Asked to comment on suggestions of ways parents can help their children enjoy their reading more thoroughly, 101 out of 107 replied: "Help him find books about the things he is interested in." And 99 said, "Encourage him to talk about the things he reads." Eighty-two suggested limiting the reading of comic books, 66 suggested limiting TV viewing time. Sixty-three recommended reading aloud in the family.

Seventy-one parents reported that their middle-grade children seem to enjoy reading in their free time. Asked what the

youngsters read at home, their parents responded as follows:

Story or library books	81
School readers	74
Magazines	70
Comic books	53

Specific publications were listed in the following frequencies:

Newspapers,	20
Scouting publications,	20
Children's magazines,	11 (Those mentioned were <i>Jack and Jill</i> and <i>Children's Digest</i>)
Adult magazines,	15 (Those mentioned: <i>Reader's Digest</i> , <i>National Geographic</i> , <i>Life</i> , <i>Newsweek</i> , <i>Saturday Evening Post</i> , Movie magazines)
Church publications,	3
Books on nature and science,	4

School magazines, 2
Encyclopedias, 2

Asked what books the parents recommend to their children, 79 replied that they were dependent upon the teacher and librarian for suggestions, 46 indicated they could suggest only the books they had read as children, and 26 recommended titles they had read about in some book or magazine. Interestingly enough not one parent interviewed in the pilot study had received any suggestions from the teacher or librarian as to the books that might well be recommended to children. In fact, several volunteered the wish that occasionally teachers and librarians would send home brief lists of books that parents might recommend to their youngsters. As one mother put it, "How can I recommend anything but *Black Beauty*, *Tom Sawyer*, and the books I read as a child? I don't know about any others. But I'll bet that some good children's books have been published since then."

On Improving Reading Skills

Although more parents expressed interest in fostering reading enjoyment, those concerned with improving reading skills were more outspoken in their questions and criticism. The five interviewers were so impressed with this that they asked for a special conference to discuss this aspect of the parent responses.

The first point that interviewers wanted to bring out was the parents' concern over what they felt to be the failure to teach phonics (variously referred to as syllable-division, the ABC method, and sounding) as a part of the teaching of reading. Interviewers reported that many parents were worried because they thought

that reading was being taught almost exclusively by sight, not by the sound of the letters and syllables. This same concern is reflected in the comparatively high tally recorded for the questions that have troubled parents:

- Why don't children learn their ABCs before they start to read? 50
- Do they still teach reading by the sound of the letters? 41
- Do they do anything else to help a child recognize a new word? 39

Asked if they had some further comment or question as to how reading is taught today, 19 of the 107 parents spoke out.

Five commented on present-day methods of teaching reading:

1. I wonder about this progressive system.
2. Why do schools use progressive methods?
3. I disapprove of present methods of teaching.
4. I think reading is taught better today.
5. They should explain the various systems of teaching reading.

Three raised questions or made comments related to the general area of the ABCs-phonics-spelling:

1. Is the alphabet ever taught as such?
2. I don't approve of teaching reading without phonics.
3. Why isn't more spelling taught so children can read better?

During the conference, I found that interviewers were deeply concerned over the anxiety of parents and expressed the fear that tabulation of the interview-questionnaires would not reflect that anxiety. Their oral report of parent comments and the rather heated discussion which followed indicated that parents and interviewers alike seemed to feel there are two mutually exclusive ways of teaching reading, two "systems" as they put it:

1. By sight, which they call the "new" or "progressive" method, and

2. By sounding the letters and syllables (phonics), which they invariably call the "old" method.

Interviewers agreed that a large number of parents felt the second is preferable and is neglected today. They reported no comment that would indicate parents felt the two "systems" might be used simultaneously, one supplementing the other. In fact, it seemed evident that parents were poorly informed as to the place of "sight" reading and the place of "phonics" in the total reading program. To these parents it seemed to be a question of one system or the other rather than using both of these word-recognition techniques along with others not mentioned by the parents.

In Conclusion

In the informal discussion with interviewers, it became apparent that the outspoken criticism of a few anxious parents had made a deeper impression on the interviewers than the less provocative comments of many well-satisfied parents.

The following data from the completed interview-questionnaires give an interesting picture of the interests and attitudes of the parents in this particular group:

1. When asked what questions concerned them most, forty percent expressed in-

Last year, as a new elementary teacher, I made an attempt not to rely solely on textbooks but to make use of as many other sources as possible to supplement the classroom work.

My sixth grade class took a trip early in the spring to the United Nations in New York City. It was there that I fully realized what an impact the trip could have on our work.

Immediately after the trip, we planned a United Nations Flag Display. There was a place for all in the project. A souvenir folder of the flags in color was used as the basis for the flags. The flags were cut from colored construction paper. When the flags were com-

pleted they were mounted on a large bulletin board in the school's main corridor. The value of the project was well worth the time spent on it. The pupils showed remarkable interest in trying to identify flags and their countries. The class derived much satisfaction from the project. Each student could see his flags as part of a whole display.

2. Of the five parents who volunteered some comment about present-day methods of teaching reading, two expressed curiosity about "progressive methods"; one wanted an explanation about the various systems of teaching reading; one expressed disapproval of "present methods" of teaching reading; and one said "I think reading is taught better today."
3. Three of the nineteen who had some further comment on how reading is taught raised questions about the general area of ABCs-phonics-spelling. Four of the nineteen raised questions about children's books and about the extent of children's reading comprehension.
4. Parents reported that only 8.3 of their children were making poor progress in reading while 63.6 percent were making good or excellent progress.

Such responses as these seem to indicate a general satisfaction with the progress that children are making in reading, some interest in how reading is taught but greater interest in the development of reading pleasures, and a wide range of attitudes regarding the methods of teaching reading.

There is much in the community that can be utilized in the classroom to enrich the curriculum.

—George E. Dixon

Mr. Dixon is a sixth grade teacher in Rochelle Park, New Jersey.

Some Picture-Story Books

Children respond easily and naturally to picture-story books. A sympathetic adult usually has to act as the agent to get the child and the book together, of course. In order to promote growth in knowledge and understanding, the adult should be willing to study both the child and the book. For the most desirable results, a child who is met on his own level of appreciation and taste must gradually be led to an appreciation of the very best in picture-story books. Through this process of growth, he will then be able to judge by his own experiences rather than from some adult's dictation of taste or appreciation.

If picture-story books are to be selected which will have meaning and interest for the child, it is well to investigate briefly what a five- or six year- old is really like. What stage of growth has he attained so that he may be interested in and enjoy picture-story books?

Although the developmental changes which occur in the years from five to seven are not as striking as those which occur in infancy, they are important and should not be overlooked either at home or at school.

The child's mental growth is revealed by his use of language. Through it he is able to express his curiosity and satisfy to some degree his appetite for information about the world in which he lives. It also serves as an important tool for his social life and an outlet for expressing his emotions.

If given a chance, the child learns many uses of books. He becomes able to identify many pictures, to follow a simple story told by pictures, to page through a book and to hold it right side up. Long before a child can read, when phrases and words are but symbols among the drawings, he can listen to a story and trace the action of the plot in pictures when the story-teller or reader has finished.

Factors in Book Selection

Here are some desirable points to remember in selecting books for small children:

1. Adults must keep in mind that the *interest span* of the child is relatively short. Suitable books will be those with simple themes, not too much content, and those which contain many well-selected pictures.

2. Children are gregarious and like being with people, especially with other children. They enjoy sharing activities with others. Books offer an opportunity for sharing with others.

3. Children like make-believe and wonder. Since the dawn of time, all races of men have loved tales of magic and wonder. Children accept with delight animals that "talk" and people who can "talk" to animals, for example.

4. It is important that the child can have experiences in which he sees that people *do* as well as wish. In realistic stories he envisions the building of a great

Miss Miller is a first grade teacher in the Columbus, Ohio, public schools.

plane instead of a "magic carpet," the elimination of disease by chemical processes instead of a "magic wand." The balance between the two kinds of wonder is important. Their interweaving enriches living.

5. A child likes humor. Life cannot be too cruel to a child who has learned to laugh with others or at himself when occasion demands. A child who has had a wide and wholesome experience with books will have a better yardstick for measuring humor in all areas of living than he otherwise might have without such a literary experience.

6. Children are free from prejudices toward other social groups. Books are excellent aids in showing how more *alike* than *different* people are in various racial, national, and religious groups. Books are valuable in providing experiences which help bring better understandings.

7. It is important to get books for this age child which are within the child's experiences, the here and now; experiences with which he is familiar, his home, family, school, and immediate environment.

Availability of Picture-story Books

With the development of modern methods of printing which border on the miraculous, the markets are flooded with many books which often lack quality. It becomes a real task for one to choose suitable books from the vast number available and yet remain within the funds allotted to teachers or librarians to do so. It is good economy to buy the best illustrated books, because it is the best type of literature which attracts the work of the best artists. One book of pleasing proportions with good paper, attractive print, wide margins, artistic binding, and beautifully conceived and executed illustrations, which fit a well-written text, is worth a dozen editions of the same text cheaply done.

Laura Richards, speaking of the past in children's book production, once said, "We were not smothered as we are today with children's books. It is this smothering process that makes bibliographies of children's books imperative." Most teachers have the feeling of being "smothered" with the vast number of books currently available when trying to make suitable selections for children whom they teach.

A Selected List

Animal Stories:

Banigan, Sharon,

Tinkle and Twinkle.

Kenosha, Wis.: John Martin's House.

Beyer, Ernestine,

Happy Animal Families.

Pictures by John Pike. New York: Grosset and Dunlap.

Bracker, Charles,
Brown, Margaret,

Chester.
The Duck.

New York: Verita Press.
Photographs by Ylla. New York: Harper.

Konkle, Janet,
Newberry, Clare Turlay,
Stewart, Elizabeth Laing,

Once There Was a Kitten.
April's Kittens.
Billy Buys a Dog.

Chicago: Children's Press.
New York: Harper.
Pictures by Frances Eckart.
Chicago: Reilly and Lee.

Birthdays:

Gay, Romney,

Corally Crother's Birthday.

New York: Grosset and Dunlap.

Howard, Janet,

*Counting Katie.*Illustrated by de Forest Cotton.
New York: Lothrop, Lee and
Shepard.

Liang-Yen,

*Dee Dee's Birthday.*New York: Oxford University
Press.

Sewell, Helen,

Birthdays For Robin.

New York: Macmillan.

Squires, Elizabeth Briggs,

*David's Silver-Dollar.*Illustrated by Margot Austin.
New York: Platt and Munk.**Community-Relationships:**

Bell, Janet,

*Sunday in the Park.*Pictures by Aline Appel. Robert
McBride.Brown, Margaret
(Edith Hurd.),*The Little Fat Policeman.*Pictures by Alice and Martin
Provenson. New York: Simon
and Schuster.

Gilbert, Helen Earle,

*Doctor Trotter and His Big
Gold Watch.*Illustrations by Margaret Brad-
field. New York: Abingdon-
Cokesbury Press.

MacGregor, Ellen,

*Tommy and the Telephone.*Illustrated by Zabeth Selover.
Chicago: Albert Whitman.

Schneider, Nina,

*While Susie Sleeps.*Pictures by Dagmar Wilson.
New York: Wm. R. Scott.

Tensen, Ruth,

*Come to the City.*Pictures by Phyllis Graff. Chi-
cago: Reilly and Lee.**Construction Stories:**

Beim, Jerrold,

*Tim and the Tool Chest.*Illustrations by Tracy Sugarman.
New York: William Morrow.

Brown, Margaret,

*The Wonderful House.*Pictures by J. P. Miller. New
York: Simon and Schuster.

Freeman, Ruth and Harrop,

*Chips and Little Chips.*Pictures by Eldred Smith. Chi-
cago: Albert Whitman.

Green, Mary McBurney,

*Everybody Has a House.*Pictures by Jean Bendick. New
York: William R. Scott.

Lenski, Lois,

*Up Goes the House.*Pictures by Elizabeth Ripley.
New York: Oxford University
Press.**Fanciful Stories:**

Austin, Margot,

Barney's Adventure.

New York: E. P. Dutton.

Bemelmans, Ludwig,

Madeline.

New York: Simon and Schuster.

Brown, Margaret,

*Wait Till the Moon is Full.*Pictures by Garth Williams.
New York: Harper Bros. also
The Dream Book. Illustrated
by Richard Floethe. New
York: Random House. *The
Sleepy Little Lion.* Photo-
graphs by Ylla. New York:
Harper.

Coe, Lloyd,

Charcoal.

New York: Thomas Y. Crowell.

Colby, Carroll,

Gabbit, The Magic Rabbit.

New York: Coward McCann.

Engelbreton, Betty,

*What Happened to George?*Illustrated by Esther Friend.
Chicago: Rand-McNally.

Hitte, Kathryn,

*Lost and Found.*Pictures by Priscilla Pointier.
New York: Abingdon-
Cokesbury.

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| Jarratt, Elizabeth, | <i>Smart Mr. Tim.</i> | Pictures by Nell Stolp Smock.
New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury. |
| Krauss, Ruth, | <i>The Backward Day.</i> | Pictures by Marc Simont. New York: Harper. |
| Steiner, Charlotte, | <i>Make Believe Puppy.</i> | Photographs by Helen Heller.
New York: Lothrop, Lee and Shephard. |
| Turner, Nancy Byrd, | <i>When It Rained Cats and Dogs.</i> | Pictures by Tibor Gergely. New York: J. B. Lippincott. |
| Family-Relationships: | | |
| Abel, Ruth and Ray,
Beim, Lorraine, | <i>The New Sitter.
Benjamin Busy Body.</i> | New York: University Press.
Pictures by Violet La Mont. New York: Harcourt, Brace. |
| Brann, Esther, | <i>A Book For Baby.</i> | New York: The Macmillan Company. <i>Bobbie and Donnie Were Twins.</i> |
| Dikeman, Peg, | <i>Henry's Wagon.</i> | Illustrated by Margie. Garden City, New York: Garden City. |
| Evans, Katherine,
Hitte, Kathryn, | <i>Flowers for Mother.
Surprise for Susan.</i> | Philadelphia: David McKay.
Pictures by Pelagie Doane. New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury. |
| Lenski, Lois, | <i>Papa Small.</i> | New York: Oxford University Press. <i>Let's Play House.</i> |
| Medon, Florence, | <i>Mother's Helpers.</i> | Pictures by Dorothy Grider. Garden City, New York: Garden City. |
| Milhuis, Winifred,
McCullough, John, | <i>Here Comes Daddy.
At Our House.</i> | New York: William R. Scott.
Pictures by Roger Duvoisin. New York: Wm. R. Scott. |
| Sterling, Helen, | <i>The Biggest Family in the Town.</i> | Pictures by Vance Locke. Philadelphia: David McKay. |
| Shane, Ruth and Harold, | <i>The New Baby.</i> | Illustrated by Eloise Wilkin. New York: Simon and Schuster. |
| Weir, Ruth Cramer, | <i>The Great Big Noise.</i> | Illustrated by Esther Friend. Chicago: Wilcox and Follett. |
| Werner, Jane, | <i>Good Morning and Good Night.</i> | Pictures by Eloise Wilkin. New York: Simon and Schuster. |
| Zolotov, Charlotte, | <i>But Not Billy.</i> | Pictures by Lys Cassal. New York: Harper. |
| Holiday Stories: | | |
| Baruch, Dorothy W., | <i>Christmas Stocking.</i> | Pictures by Lucienne Bloch. New York: William R. Scott. |
| Bright, Robert, | <i>Georgie.</i> | Garden City, New York: Doubleday Doran. |
| Brown, Margaret, | <i>Christmas in the Barn.</i> | Illustrated by Barbara Cooney. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell. |
| | <i>A Pussycat's Christmas.</i> | Pictures by Helen Stone. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell. |
| | <i>The Golden Egg Book;</i> | Illustrated by Leonard Weisgard. New York: Simon and Schuster. |

Duvoisin, Roger,
Newberry, Clare Turlay,
Steiner, Charlotte,
Walters, Marguerite,

Weise, Kurt,
Safety Stories:

Main, Mildred Miles,
Neville, Vera,

Sherman, Elizabeth,

School-Relationships:

Beim, Jerrold,

Michaels, Fannie L.,

McCready, Agnes,

Steiner, Charlotte,

Wynkoop, Margaret L.,

Yowell, Stella,

Seasonal Stories:

Boyle, Joyce,

Kraus, Ruth,

Lenski, Lois,

Parker, Bertha Morris,

Petunia's Christmas.
Marshmallow.
A Surprise for Mrs. Bunny
The Real Santa Claus.

Happy Easter.

Polly, Patsy, and Pat.
Safety for Sandy.

Let's Look Ahead.

Andy and the School Bus.

A Day in School.

A Day at School.

A B C.
Lulu's Play School.

Mac Goes to School.

Robert's School.

Timothy's Twelve Months.

The Carrot Seed.

Spring is Here.

Spring is Here.

New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
New York: Harper and Brothers.
New York: Wonder Books.
Illustrated by Meg Wohlberg.
Lothrop, Lee and Shepard.
New York: Viking.

Chicago: Follett Publishing Co.
New York: Thomas Nelson and
Sons.

Pictures Courtesy National
Safety Council. Sketches by
Lois Fisher. Chicago: Chil-
dren's Press.

Illustrated by Leonard Shortall.
New York: William Morrow
and Company. *The Smallest
Boy in the Class*; Illustrated by
Meg Wohlberg New York:
William Morrow.

Illustrated by Mildred Lyon
Hetherington. Chicago:
Beckly-Cardy.

Photographs by Ruth A.
Nichols. New York: E. P.
Dutton.

New York: Franklin Watts.
Garden City, New York:
Doubleday.

Photographs by Robert Yarnall
Richie.

Garden City, New York:
Doubleday, Doran.

Illustrated by Matilda Brewer.
Chicago: Wheeler Publishing
Company.

Illustrated by Georgia Middle-
brook. New York: Abingdon-
Cokesbury.

Pictures by Crockett Johnson.
New York: Harper.

The Growing Story. Pictures by
Phyllis Rowand. New York:
Harper.

New York: Oxford University
Press. *Now It's Fall; I like
Winter*; New York: Oxford
University Press.

Illustrated by Virginia Braden-
dick. Evanston, Ill.: Row
Peterson.

- Tresselt, Alvin, *Hi, Mister Robin.* Pictures by Roger Duvoisin. Lothrop, Lee and Shepard.
- Sensory Impressions:**
- Brown, Margaret, *The Noisy Book.* Pictures Leonard Weisgard. New York: William R. Scott Inc. *Indoor Noisy Book; Country Noisy; Seashore Noisy Book;* Illustrated by Leonard Weisgard. New York: William R. Scott.
- Etting, Mary, *Wheels and Noises.* Illustrated by Elizabeth Dauler. New York: Wonder Books.
- Hoke, Helen, *The Fuzzy Puppy.* Pictures by Dick Hart. New York: Julian Messner.
- The Sbaggy Pony.* Pictures by Dick Hart. New York: Julian Messner.
- Hoke, Helen and (Natalie Fox), *The Woolly Lamb.* Pictures by Sally Tate. New York: Julian Messner.
- Hoke, Helen and (Miriam Teichner), *The Fuzzy Kitten.* Pictures by Meg Wohlberg. New York: Julian Messner.
- Hoke, Helen, *The Furry Bear.* Pictures by Sally Tate. New York: Julian Messner.
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- Transportation:**
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HAVERLY O. MOYER

Can Ear-Training Improve English Usage?

Suppose Robert Burns had written:

O wod some Pow'r the giftie gie us
To *hear* ourselves as others *hear* us!
It wod from many a blunder free us
And foolish notion.

Wouldn't that have been an excellent suggestion for the improvement of oral communication? Isn't it probable that errors in oral expression would become more obvious to the speaker if he were to "*hear* himself as others *hear* him" as well as to hear himself as he speaks to others? Wouldn't a teaching procedure, in which a tape recorder was used to give children an opportunity to hear themselves as others hear them, help teachers to realize that language ability develops best when children have an opportunity to hear themselves talk about things in which they are interested? Wouldn't they discover that language ability develops best when children have an opportunity to respond freely to situations in which oral language is the tool of communication, when the children deal with real problems, and when the children see the results of their communications in the effect it has on their associates?

Presumably, proficiency in the use of language can best develop through use of language in natural situations with the direction of attention toward language as a tool,¹ toward a

realization of the ways to utilize language for specific communication purposes. This probably can be accomplished by a combination of methods, but it is possible that ear-training is the method which needs to be more fully explored.

Although it has often been stated that the speech level of children can best be altered through ear training, there is inadequate research to support that principle;² and many teachers are convinced that the principle is not practical. However, the reason for teacher opposition may be the fairly general belief that pupils must be drilled on corrective exercises to prepare them for final examinations. The argument is frequently presented that children will not pass the questions on correct usage of the Preliminary Regents Examinations or standardized tests unless they have written "corrective exercises."

Consequently, the teaching of English in many schools has been an artificial, atomistic approach to language development. Instead of

¹Lee and Lee, *The Child and His Curriculum*, D. Appleton-Century Company, 1940, p. 320.

²Dora V. Smith, *The Changing Elementary School*, Report of the Regents Inquiry, pp. 360-1; also Lee, and Lee, *The Child and His Curriculum*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1950, p. 368.

experiences which will help children develop language ability in ways that are immediately useful and directed toward some power in communication, the teaching is aimed toward memorization of elementals, and rules, and the customary drill on identifying grammar forms. The emphasis is on parts of speech rather than on speech, on form rather than expression of thought, on purity rather than fluency.

There is evidence that teachers give far too much of the time reserved for language experiences in the elementary curriculum to formal drill on mechanics and therefore deprive children of the opportunity for the kinds of language experiences in the classroom which would provide real content of worth to the pupils. If there were any experimental evidence that ear-training with the use of a recording device produces as great knowledge of correct usage as do formal drills, it is probable that many teachers would be induced to substitute language activities of a more vital, functional nature, in place of the formal drills. That would free the language program from the many traditional restraints and open it to opportunities for activities which might increase the children's social competency¹ through an increased power in oral communication.

An experiment was conducted to find answers to the questions concerning improvement of language usage through ear-training. Three grades were chosen as experimental groups. Since the major emphasis on formal correct usage seems to fall in the middle and upper grades, and since much more work of that kind is usually included than on oral English, in those grades, it was decided that grades four, six, and eight would give a fair sampling of that grade range. It seemed reasonable to assume that if ear training by recordings would produce desirable results in those grades, it would be equally useful in other grades.

These grades were used to represent as nearly as possible, typical grades of a small elementary school with regard to size, range of ability, and home background of the pupils.

The testing and experimental work was carried on, first, over a period of sixteen weeks. Tests were given at the beginning and at the end of the experiment. The initial status and final status of the groups were determined by the use of four tests. Three of the tests were standardized. The fourth was an original test compiled from New York State Regents Examinations in Elementary English.

The variable factor of this experiment was the method used in the instruction of the control group on one hand, and the method used with the experimental group on the other. The ear-training procedure was used with the experimental group. A tape recorder was the device for making the ear-training possible. No written drills nor formal exercises were used. Nearly all of the lesson periods were given to recording and analyzing the effectiveness of the language in the stories, reports, or language games of the children. Every attempt was made to have the procedure as natural and functional as possible. Teacher-prepared materials were used only when the children did not have something which they needed to have recorded. Discussion of language as it is used and interest in language as a social tool were encouraged. A critical, but friendly, attitude about language usage was fostered. The children learned to listen to each other, which helped promote ear-training in the usual or natural situation. This was as important as the recording experiences.

The children were induced to think of language as a medium of self-expression with which they could experiment to discover the effectiveness of one way of saying something as contrasted with another.

The second part of the study was conducted under similar conditions one year later. The children of the fourth grade and sixth grade

¹Floyd H. Allport, *Social Psychology*, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1925, pp. 196-198.

were studied the first semester of their fifth and seventh grades respectively.

The purposes of this follow-up study during the second experimental period were to find out if the changes which appeared in the initial period would become more pronounced and to discover what effect ear-training had on quality of *oral expression* and *oral composition* by recording stories from both experimental and control groups in September and January and evaluating the differences.

The findings of the study showed the following results. The control group and the experimental groups both gained from the teaching methods which were used. The statistical analysis showed that the only significant gains appearing in the first experimental period, which met the basic assumption of the statistical method, favored the experimental group. There was no instance where a control group surpassed an experimental group on improvement.

The Regents Items Test was given to find out whether pupils who were taught by ear-training method would be able to pass the language usage items on the Regents Examination. The results indicate that they would if the final Regents Items Test were marked in the conventional way—(75%-passing); then sixty percent of the fourth graders passed; ninety-five percent of the sixth graders passed, and all of the eighth graders passed.

Some of the errors made in oral expression were also the errors made on the standardized tests. Most of the errors in oral expression, however, were not items of correct English usage, but the superfluous use of: *and*, *so*, or the *ab's*, *uh's* and other sounds indicative of lack of fluency.

There was no positive correlation of any significance between improvement made in oral expression and improvement made on standardized tests. All were zero-order correlations offering no relationship of any importance.

The number of run-on sentences was reduced during the experimental period. The pronunciation of certain words was corrected. There was much improvement in ease, fluency, and in some cases, volume, tone, enunciation, and quality.

The changes which appeared in the initial period favoring the experimental groups became more pronounced in the second experimental period.

The differences between control and experimental groups on improvement in quality of *oral expression* and *oral composition* were of high significance.

The experimental groups made exceptional progress during periods when the ear-training procedure was used in comparison to their progress during the interval when it was not used.

The results of this study suggest the following implications for course modification in elementary English.

Ear-training through the use of a recording device can alter very effectively the speech level of children. It can provide not only for improvement in knowledge of correct items of English usage, but also give the pupils help in other aspects of oral expression. For instance, it can help to improve correct control of volume, tone, enunciation, and pronunciation. It can be used to help children improve in sentence sense and appropriateness of forms of expression. It can help them to be poised, confident, and capable in group situations which require oral communication.

Ear-training can help establish the good habits of speech which need to become automatic for effectiveness in social communication. The good habits refer to the necessary language choices such as: appropriate words, idioms, sentence structure, acceptable tone, and discriminate emphasis.

Ear-training can eliminate some of the criticism of the present English program of the elementary school. Much, if not all, of the

drills on correct usage in which the pupils fill in the blanks or cross out alternate forms can be omitted. Such practice does not have the power to alter speech habits that ear-training does because it is silent and thus detached from genuine communication.

The conventional methods do not generally have the motivating force for self-improvement that the ear-training method provides. Unless a child really wants to improve his speech, drill is a waste of time. The ear-training approach, in which recordings are made of those things which seem important to the child, gives motivation that is not so easily produced by other methods. The child hears himself as others hear him and has the privilege of immediate knowledge of results and self-evaluation.

Conventional methods tend to emphasize correctness but frequently fail to avoid flatness, dullness, or ineptness of expression. Ear-training can attack those factors of expression directly and develop appreciation for language which has brightness, sparkle, accuracy, and clarity.

It does these things in situations calling for genuine communication and can help the pupils to appreciate the fact that words are not "right" nor "wrong," but that the setting in which the word is used determines its correctness.

It would seem that an English program should include ear-training as the method for improving oral communication combined with instruction in written expression which should grow out of pupils' needs to record actual experiences, feelings, or ideas. If both phases of communication were properly balanced and activities were provided that arose from pupil experiences, a much more vital language pro-

gram should result. The values of such a program should be evident because of the pupil's improvement in the use of language for social effectiveness, and also in favorable development of personality.

Charles Fries,⁴ in discussing the implications of modern linguistic science, criticizes the English program which is usually found. He says that in English—even in our times—teachers are still giving more time to a study of grammar and usage than to almost any other aspect of English. Unfortunately, from the point of view of modern linguistic science, much of this work is not only wasted time, it is harmful practice. It is wasted time because it employs methods and materials that could not possibly attain the ends desired, no matter how much time was given to English. It is harmful because the habits set up and the views inculcated turn the student away from the only source of real knowledge—the actual language of the people about them. Our students are practically never given the tools of observation and analysis necessary to the use of these resources.

The use of an ear-training method which depends upon recording the speech of children can help to overcome some of the weaknesses of the English teaching described in the preceding paragraph. It certainly gives the children excellent opportunities to observe with objectivity and analyze with care their own oral expression. It is apparent from this study that these results can be obtained without sacrificing the presumed values of traditional teaching.

⁴Charles C. Fries, "The Implications of Modern Linguistic Science," *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 1947, p. 72.

Password—"Perpendicular"!

Learning two hundred words a year joyfully is better than learning them laboriously, and better still than not learning them at all! This, briefly stated, is the case on behalf of the "password" idea.

A password is a combination of magic sounds which presumably prevents our enemies from entering our atomic plants and cabling top secrets to the Kremlin—simultaneously, no doubt, exposing our forgetful friends to the risk of being summarily disposed of. The idea of putting the password to domestic use originated one evening at the dinner table and—like Newton's discovery of the law of gravitation—purely by chance. It occurred to 11-year-old Diana that by the use of a password we might aid the local police to protect our home from marauders in these precarious times. No outsider would be admitted unless he were able to pronounce the magic word! Actually it turned out instead that no one within the home was allowed to leave it or do anything he wanted to do in it without giving the password—and this constituted its usefulness as a learning device—but this development was not foreseen at the outset.

Just before the password idea was broached I had been rereading *Pickwick Papers*, and after entertaining Diana with some of the book's most hilarious episodes, I discovered to my surprise that with a little help she could read it too. As a result, for over a week *Pickwick* had superseded Arthur Godfrey and Davy Crockett as a household word. So "Pickwick"

naturally became the first password; and the dear old fellow grew still more popular when Diana discovered that he could open a car door that had been locked in her face, produce a second helping of ice cream, and extract permission to stay up ten minutes past her bedtime to finish her diary. "Pickwick" was an *Open Sesame*—a word to be conned and uttered with an exciting blend of delight and terror. How wonderful to have remembered it! How awful if one were to forget!

After a thrilling day with "Pickwick" Diana asked: "What will the password be for tomorrow?" The question caught me unprepared. I had not anticipated that the password might be subject to daily change. So I proposed the first word that occurred to me—the name of Pickwick's inimitable henchman, Weller. And we gaily "Wellered" our way through the second day of the password era.

A request for a new password for the third day suggested that we might have stumbled upon a device for correcting the lack of information and of vocabulary which teachers find all too prevalent today. So I more thoughtfully selected "perpendicular" as the password for Day Three. Diana did not know what "perpendicular" meant, but she guaranteed she could spell it, and she did, thus demonstrating (please note, Dr. Flesch!) that she had been thoroughly grounded in phonics.

Mr. Steel is Professor of English in the State University Teachers College, Brockport, New York.

Since she loves guessing games as well as passwords, it seemed a good idea to have her guess its meaning. But using the most convenient equipment available—a knife—and by telling her that when the knife was tilted it was not perpendicular to the table, and that when it was held upright, it was, I made her feel that she had grasped what this new word meant.

"Can you show me you understand 'perpendicular' by using it in a sentence?" I asked, and after some reflection she came up with: "If a house isn't perpendicular, it will fall down."

This called for an explanation of the difference between "perpendicular" and "vertical," (both are quite different from "parallel," Diana pointed out) and this information was absorbed with an interest which gave promise of its being remembered. I also felt obliged to tell Diana that some buildings which were neither perpendicular to the ground nor vertical still managed to keep from falling down—notably a famous construction in northern Italy—and the Tower of Pisa kept conversation going till well after dinner was over.

At this stage Diana said we should take turns at choosing the password, and after some hesitation she chose "grotesque," which of course paved the way for "picturesque," "statuesque," and, merely *en passant*, "burlesque!"

On the fourth day I was again caught unawares; so out of a clear sky I pulled "cheroot," which led to stories from the life of a seafaring uncle of mine, finishing up with a description of the moustache-cup from which gentlemen of that era drank tea.

Since then we have plagued each other with a long array of glamorous words from "Nebuchadnezzar" to "cholesterol"; names of people and places, and common nouns, adjectives and verbs, ten-cent words like "omnivorous" and tiny ones like "gill," which Diana found can be sounded both like "George" and like "gorge," and which, we both discovered from Webster, can have almost a dozen different meanings.

The point of all this for the teacher is that of the many devices I have used to interest children in words and stock their minds with general information, this is probably the most simple and at the same time the most effective. Sixth-graders go for passwords in a big way, and I suspect similar interest could easily be aroused anywhere from the first grade to the eighth and beyond. The password idea is indeed tailor-made for the classroom.

No doubt the day will dawn when the pleasant fiction of having to say "velocipede," or "tocsin," or "Nefertiti" before being allowed to get up to sharpen a pencil or leave the classroom for a drink of water will lose its novelty. But surely instead of deploring the eventual obsolescence of all inventions, the teacher would do well to play each for all it is worth while it is still fresh and new. When it ceases to be so, she can sit down and think up a new method—or, better still, have the students suggest one. In the meantime, by having each select a daily password, she can have the whole class gleefully learn and remember a host of facts, ideas, and words, which otherwise might never have come their way.

A Story Unit

What more effective presentation of proper punctuation could be offered than the use of official State Highway markers with corresponding punctuation? We built a model highway situation, passing through a town, with such signs as these: *boulevard* (comma and hyphen separate words even as the boulevard separates two sections of the highway), *stop* (of course, a period was used here), railroad warning—*stop, look, listen* (period followed by a capital), *T* crossing (the question mark), *curves* (commas), *side and main road junctions* (used two signs here—sentence and paragraph), and *slow, school* (colon). One of our poorer students exhibited the unusual idea of adding the hospital sign for poor writing. Another thought of the hill sign for those who write uphill or have crooked margins.

The children had fun making the scene. Each one had a part, making signs, buildings, or trees. One boy brought his little trucks and cars to put on the highways and a few pieces of track from his train set. Some brought little plastic figures to include in the scene. Otherwise we made everything, including a well and tiny bushes.

In order to ride safely along our Good Punctuation Highway, we needed a Rule Book. We went to our text to find the rules. The index helped us to locate the rules which we put in our individual rule books along with the explanation of the proper signs. Safety posters had to be made. One boy made a map of our model.

Much emphasis was placed on safety, both driver and pedestrian, throughout the unit. Snow at this season provided a discussion on blocked streets with signs and safe places for sledding. We also discussed ways of preventing accidents and wrote rules for prevention. This we discovered included spelling and health text lessons also.

To pass the test on Good Punctuation Highway three requirements had to be met: (1) a punctuation test, (2) a well-told story, and (3) a well-written story. One who was found a safe driver, by passing his test, would receive a "driver's license" for the Good Punctuation Highway. Forms for these were typed at home by one of the class members.

Each child selected a favorite story from the basic reader to present to the class in flannelgraph. Here was a need for telling the story and making it interesting. The additional art work was done in spare time or at home. Many wanted to do another story, and some did their original stories for flannelgraph presentation then. Several stories were presented in other classes in the school. This broadened their public speaking opportunities, gave them an outlet for doing something special, and actually inspired other classes to try making flannelgraph stories. The supervisor wanted to take a set to another school after she had seen it presented. This set constituted a very effective part of a

Miss Hoffman is a classroom teacher in Perth Amboy, New Jersey.

Parent-Teachers program also.

As soon as the Rule Book was completed the original stories were begun. Pupils were encouraged to outline the story first, then write from the outline. A few had difficulty beginning because they lacked ideas. These were led to write a story based on what they liked best. Because the stories were within their own experience, we received as a result many charming little stories showing originality, sense of relationships, desire to hold the reader's interest, good plotting, novel presentations of everyday affairs, and in some cases a wonderful sense of humor. One of the poorer students wrote a good story about a boy who liked snow, because *he* did. He needed and received more help than most of the others in spelling and wording, but it was most gratifying to hear him read his story to the class, without missing a single word, and to hear the class approve the story. That boy had a sense of belonging which he needed so much. One girl told about her accordion because it was the center of her life outside of school. She enjoys it and we did too. Since all children do not have the imagination required to develop fiction, those children were allowed to tell about their trips or other things that were important in their lives. Many of these "articles" were as interesting as the fiction style stories. Through them we learned much about the child; while he developed a style for good article writing.

Our supervisor wanted additional copies made for developing supplementary readers in other schools. Here was more penmanship practice.

Throughout the unit we had planned a hallway bulletin board display to include

our table exhibit of the Good Punctuation Highway, safety rules and posters, Rule Books, a map of the highway, flannel-graph scene, stories, copy of the license and a resume of our work. Even among the previously uninspired children, some made unusually attractive covers illustrating the stories.

Since all work at their own rate of speed, it was easy for the teacher to have many personal conferences with the young writers at the end of their first draft. In this way errors in spelling were referred to a dictionary, the use of which many, on their own, had already found invaluable. The unfamiliar words were recorded and learned. Other errors were found here, corrected, and learned correctly by repetition in writing the corrected stories. Improved sentences resulted.

Each child read his story to the class. This was followed by a time for criticism. Again some of the poorer students did well. They had learned many things from their own writing experience, and these were stories in which they all had personal interests. The discussions were animated. The children learned to criticize without becoming critical. After all, their story would soon be read.

We actually did not spend so very much time on it. Our regular work was accomplished as usual, for we used the language and health period each day for four weeks. An occasional art or reading period might be devoted to it as the need arose. In this way of devoting short periods to the work, interest never had a chance to lag.

What about the results? What did they really learn? Almost every phase of their studies was included. Correlation

brought about repetition as needed, as well as a point of contact. Improved sentences, good story structure, reciprocal criticism in story reading and telling, better flannel-graph stories with good cooperation between the one who tells the story and his helper, importance of both driver and pedestrian safety, development of more careful proof-reading, acquiring of skill in the use of index and dictionary, and the proper channeling of good self-expression are only a few things we learned. We, too, were able to see children growing as they now found themselves members of the whole group, partaking in the activity and making a real contribution not only within their own class but actually able to help those in other systems. They enjoyed the unit as a whole, and the teacher solved some problems.

A brief ten minutes were devoted to listing self-evaluation of the unit among the girls and boys. Two-thirds of the group were able to name actual learning experiences that they had. One half are planning to continue on some phase of the unit on their own. One third are eager to write more stories, including many of the poorer students.

One of the stories told of a dream the writer had about Roy Rogers and Dale Evans. The girl sent her story with a letter to them. A shy, retiring girl presented a flannelgraph story to other classes. Another wanted to make a copy of her story to send to a handicapped child she has not

met. Several had the opportunity of developing personal charm, a sense of fitness, good vocal qualities, and particular talents in art and public speaking. Of course, the teacher learned much, too, about the individual pupils. A girl who had a very unrealistic dream of candy trees and snow ice cream, etc., commented during the criticism time that she liked real things best: her story had ended with everything being real and everyone liking it that way. Another child was eager to have the Supervisor read his—he wants approbation to meet his specific needs. Another boy had the opportunity of sharing his trip to Venice with the group. Soon we will have the story of Hansel and Gretel in music, and now one of the boys is making it in flannelgraph. Another is doing the story of Washington for the birthday celebration.

What is the next step? The desire to make a good school newspaper came from the children during the unit. It is now the logical next step. This will keep us working for the rest of the year. The suggestion was originally made by one who must have an outlet for his energy and will no doubt find his editors job "just what he needed," even as the unit proved to meet the needs of the whole class.

Stories have a place here too. Each issue contains an original story. Books are reviewed. Safety, science and history have special columns. All this work must be well-written. They must tell a story well.

Children Can Create

This study is an attempt to recount an experience in creative writing with a class of fourth grade children. For any teacher who wants to do creative work with children, there is always the problem of motivation. This problem was solved for a fourth grade class in an elementary school in Panama City, Florida, when it snowed for the first time in approximately twenty years.

The elements for a genuine creative experience were present. The experience was first hand. There were possibilities of involving the senses, the imagination, the power of observation, and the memory. The children were alert and active. They were certainly in a receptive mood.

The teacher suggested that the children go outside to see the snow. Some children remained under the arcade, watching and listening. Some made snow balls. Others touched leaves that were covered with snow. There were small group conversations.

Jane: Look at the sky. It's so grey.

Sharron: Look at the trees. They're covered with snow.

Jane: Why is it snowing?

Jerry: The pipes are cold, and they're wet.

According to maturity levels, the children made value judgments based on first-hand evidence. Children perceived new relationships in their environment.

When the children returned to the room, the desks were arranged in informal groups to encourage an exchange of ideas. The teacher made certain that each child was relaxed and comfortable.

Teacher: Let's raise the window shades as high as they will go. Watch the snow falling. Think how it makes you feel. What does the snow remind you of? Would you like to listen to some poems about snow?

After the teacher read several poems, the children suggested that they try writing a poem.

Teacher: Writing a poem should be fun. How shall we go about it?

Jim: We could each write a poem.

Betty: Some of us could work together.

Dave: We could let each reading group write a poem.

Teacher: Those are all good suggestions. Which shall we choose?

Jim: Let's work in reading groups.

Teacher: Is that satisfactory with everyone?

Class: Yes.

Teacher: I'll work with one group while the others are thinking of ideas. Some of you may paint your ideas, if you wish. These children look like they are ready. How shall we begin?

Joe: Well, a poem has to rhyme.

Teacher: Not always. There are poems that do not rhyme. Would you like to hear some poems that do not rhyme?

(The teacher read examples of poems that do not rhyme.)

Teacher: Good ideas are important even if they do not rhyme. However, it's all right if you want to make your ideas rhyme.

Tom: Snow and go rhyme.

Teacher: Yes, they do. Supposing we make a list of words that rhyme. As we think of ideas, we can try to use some of the words that rhyme.

(A list of words was compiled by group discussion.)

Miss Macagnoni is assistant elementary and art director in the Panama City, Fla., public schools.

Teacher: Does anyone have something to say about the snow?

Joe: The snow is falling on the treetops.

Teacher: Good. What is Joe telling us about the snow?

Class: He is telling us that the snow falls.

Teacher: Yes, but what else is he telling us?

Class: He is telling us where the snow falls.

Teacher: I wonder if someone else could tell us something about where the snow falls?

Dale: The snow is falling on the house-tops.

Teacher: I'm glad you are looking out of the window to get ideas. Let's all look out of the window. Where is the snow falling?

Class: On the grass.

On the bicycles.

On the cartops.

On the children.

On the window panes.

On the rooftops.

Teacher: I wonder if we could put those ideas into a poem. Let's put the lines together and read them to see how they sound.

Class: The snow is falling on the treetops,
The snow is falling on the housetops,
On the grass, on the bicycles, the car-tops,

On the children, on the window panes,
on the rooftops.

Teacher: Do you like the ways it sounds?
Child: Yes.

Teacher: Shall we try to make the poem rhyme?

Children: No, we like it as it is.

Teacher: We have just talked about where the snow falls. I wonder if someone has another idea about which we could write.

Larry: We could tell *how* the snow falls.

Teacher: Did everyone see how the snow was falling? Did you look? Did you think about it? Sharron, do you have an idea?

Sharron: The snow is falling lightly.

Helen: It's shifting.

Danny: It's drifting.

Wayne: It's coming down slowly.

Pat: It's coming down silently.

Elaine: It's landing softly on the ground.

Teacher: Shall we put some of these ideas together? Larry and Danny, would you take this copy and put the ideas together?

Larry and Danny:

The snow is falling lightly,
Shifting and drifting slowly down—
Down, down silently
Landing softly on the ground.

Teacher: Now we have two main ideas. In poetry we call a group of lines about the same idea a stanza. A stanza is very much like a paragraph. Our first stanza tells where the snow falls, and our second stanza tells how the snow falls. Does someone have an idea for a third stanza?

Larry: We could tell how the snow makes us feel.

Teacher: How does the snow make you feel?

Jane: The falling snow made us feel cheerful.

Mickey: It made us want to play in it.

Wayne: The falling snow was delightful.

Teacher: Why was the snow delightful, Wayne?

Wayne: Because we had never seen snow before.

Sharron: It made me feel excited.

Larry: It made me feel queer.

Jane: It made me feel sleepy and dreamy.

Teacher: Are there any other ideas?

Would two of you like to put these ideas into a stanza?

Jane and Sharron:

The falling snow made us feel cheerful,
It made us want to play in it.

The falling snow was delightful,
Because we had never seen snow before.

It made us feel excited and queer.

It made us feel sleepy and dreamy.

Teacher: Would you like to have your poem written on a large chart so everyone could read it? What two children would like to make the chart? Mickey? Good. After Mickey and Carol finish the chart, we can all read the poem.

The teacher moved on to another group. Some of these children had chosen to paint their ideas. The teacher asked the children if they would like to talk about

the ideas in their paintings.

Steve: May I tell you about my painting?

This man is looking straight up in the sky, and the snow is coming down like little bugs.

Sheila: Snow reminds me of cotton. I have lots and lots of cotton in my painting.

Johnnie: I have a polka-dot sky. That's what a snow sky looks like.

Judy: My painting shows people playing checkers in the sky.

Jimmy: I think the snow looks like thousands of little pieces of paper.

Joe: I don't have a painting, but I would like to paint one.

Teacher: What would you like to put in your painting?

Joe: I would like to show little men in little parachutes.

Danny: No,—little men in flying saucers.

Teacher: You children have really been thinking. How do these ideas differ from the ones in the poem we have just written?

Joe: These are make-believe.

Danny: They didn't really happen.

Teacher: Is it all right to use make-believe ideas?

Joe: Sure it is. It's fun.

Teacher: Shall we try to put these ideas together?

(Two poems resulted from the ideas of this group.)

HOW THE SNOW FALLS

The snow came down
Like autumn leaves
Falling from the trees.
The snow drifted down
Like little men in little parachutes.
The snow swirled around
Like little men in flying saucers.

WHAT THE SNOW LOOKS LIKE

When you look straight up
The snow looks like little bugs.
It looks like cotton.
When you look up
It looks like a polka-dot sky.
The snow is as white as Santa's beard
The sky looks like a blue dress with white spots.
When you look up in the sky
The snowflakes look like bright stars.

The snowflakes also look like
People playing checkers in the sky.
The snowflakes look like bright lights.
The snowflakes look like flying bullets.
The snowflakes look like thousands of
little pieces of paper.

In a procedure similar to that used with the first two groups, the following poem was developed. (The children in this group were slow learners.)

WHEN IT SNOWED AT SCHOOL

The snow is fun to play in,
It is fun to skate in.
It is fun to fall in.
The snow falls swiftly,
The snow falls softly,
The snow falls on the ground.
The snow looks like bits of glass
Falling from the sky.
The snow looks like it crawls.
The snow is very soft.
The snow is very white.
The snow melts when it hits the dirt.
When the snow covers the ground
We think of the North Pole.

Activities That Grew Out of The Experience

After the poems were completed, children worked in pairs to print the poems on large sheets of manila paper. These sheets were tacked on the bulletin board so that they could be read in children's leisure time. Mimeographed copies of the poems were taken home by each child so that he could share his experience with his parents.

Since most of the children had been exposed to choral reading, it was natural that they suggest "breaking up the poems into parts" and letting everyone read. By use of this device, all groups were able to share what they had done.

Another fourth grade class was invited to visit. The children showed their paintings, gave the choral reading, and explained how their poems were written.

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MARTHA L. WILLSON

Helping Children with Writing

1. Help children to become aware of the significance of writing in their own lives and in the lives of others, in times past and present.
2. Help them to sense the satisfactions of writing. Help them to think of themselves as poets, writers, recorders, and illustrators.
3. Spend much time with children enjoying the oral interpretation of literature. Help them to love the taste and feel of words. This precedes or goes hand-in-hand with successful writing.
4. Try to give children a wealth of varied experiences so that they have something to write about and "a reason for saying it."
5. Try to have a classroom environment (physical, emotional, social, intellectual) conducive to writing. The teacher's enthusiasm is a "contagious" part of such an environment. A child's emotional life, his level of social interaction, his background of experience, his interests, and his knowledge are deciding factors in his writing success.
6. Provide ample time for writing experience and instruction, including the sharing of children's work. Sharing their efforts helps them to sense the satisfactions of writing.

It also helps them improve the quality of their written expression. Encourage the use of spare moments for writing at home and at school.

7. Cherish crude attempts. Even though their work is far from "smooth," encourage children to "push on" in writing. Emphasize good points instead of errors.
8. Give children a sense of adequacy, achievement, power, and personal worth—of having something to offer that will be of interest to others. This can be done, in part, by helping children "see" more in their writings than they themselves can see. Continuous praise by the teacher is often the clue to writing growth in children.
9. Spend much time with children in the "butcher-paper" stage of writing. Help them "savor" their writings before they "set." Give children all the help they need.
10. Use large and small ideas for motivation. For example, let each child have his own mailbox for notices, valentines, Christmas cards, and the like. (Make "note-writing" legal! Just for fun thought!); use pictures to motivate; make suggestions for writing

Mrs. Willson is Assistant Professor of Education at Florida State University, Tallahassee.

in a novel way; display writings of all children; motivate by having children write memoranda, messages, labels, and the like; relate much writing to "unit work" and other phases of the school day; encourage children to write of their personal experiences, both in and out of school. Just having a "special container" for writings motivates!

11. Encourage epidemics or "waves" of writing. Poetry, story books, "unit books," newspapers, and autobiographies are examples of such experiences.
12. Try to keep a balance throughout the year between practical writing and creative writing, trusting that children who are "careful scribes" in practical writing will also be careful scribes when they are being "minstrels of their own free spirits," as well.

SPECIFIC SUGGESTIONS FOR PRACTICAL WRITING

1. Correct the child's material with him. Devise some way to get around to all the children in a group. One way is to work with a small group at a time. (The vigorous use of the red or blue pencil can create a sense of inadequacy in children).
2. Follow a plan or "understanding" with the children as to how you will help them both in the time set aside especially for a writing experience, and in the bits of spare-time when they are "on their own" in writing. For example, post a paper to be signed if children want help with some of their special "spare-time" writing; write needed words on slips of paper for children as they are writing (writing words on the blackboard can cause confusion!); encourage the use of many self-help materials—models from the blackboard, word or

phrase charts, individual word-books, text-books, dictionaries. Guide children to become increasingly more independent, making fewer requests for help.

3. In a special writing experience, guide the development of sensitivity to the demands of the situation. Talk over with children the purpose for the particular writing they are to do. Help them "think through" suitable content. Require accurate information. Help them with suitable form. (Ideas first! Form second!) Give children understandings and motivation for learning before rules.
4. Help children see such things as sentence structure, paragraphing, letter forms, and punctuation as aids to interpretation, spelling and legible handwriting as aids to communication. Analyze examples of good writing with children. Help them to learn the value of proofreading—both silent and oral—and practice this habit.
5. Help children develop their own individual "ways of writing," and respect their own writing contributions to the enterprises of the classroom.

SUGGESTED READINGS

- A.C.E. *When Children Write*.
 Applegate, Mauree. *Everybody's Business Our Children*.
 Burrows, Alvina Truett, et al *They All Want to Write*.
 Cole, Natalie. *The Arts in the Classroom*.
 Florida State Bulletin. *Experiencing the Language Arts*.
 Nesbitt, Marion. *A Public School for Tomorrow*.
 N.C.T.E. *Language Arts for Today's Children*.
 Strickland, Ruth. *Language Arts in the Elementary School*.

Words Have Many Meanings

Jerry was explaining why he didn't turn in his homework.

"I didn't have time."

Jerry was right. After school he had made a hurried trip to the dentist, was an emergency babysitter, mowed the lawn, ate dinner, and attended a scout meeting.

It was a few minutes before the afternoon session was to begin. The children were around my desk listening to Jerry's tale of woe. They readily entered the discussion.

"He didn't use his time very well."

"Yes he did, he had lots to do."

"I've got lots of time for everything and I do as much as Jerry does."

"If you get too rushed after school, it's confusing."

"Sometimes I just waste my time."

Other children were drawn into the discussion, lively and interested sixth graders, anxious to keep the talk going.

"What is time, anyway?" I asked.

Each child had something he wanted to say. We decided to forgo our planned schedule for this sudden interest in *time*. We soon discovered that we had twenty-five different interpretations of the word. Our reference books were proving inadequate. We were learning something about the subjective approach to language.

Betty said, "Words don't mean the same thing to everyone, do they?"

We agreed. We developed the idea that it is important to know many definitions of a word, and that a word or phrase may mean different things to different

people depending upon locale and environment.

The word *time* was a fascinating one, and we wanted to explore it further.

We agreed that we would spend part of our evening at home writing down as many meanings as we could about our elusive word. Many children wanted to talk about this word with their parents. We thought it would be interesting to see if adults looked at words in the same way children do.

The following day we read our definitions. We found meanings that were similar, some that were highly personal, others that were poetic. Most of the children said that *time* was a "clock, minutes, hours, days, years." Some said that it was "precious" or "peculiar" and that it imposed a "form of responsibility on an individual." One child said that time "was long in coming, but that when looked back upon was very short." The idea was developed that "time could not be bought" and that it could be "a friend if used wisely." Other children noticed that time could "drag" but could also "fly." Time was "useful," "wonderful," and also "wasted." One child said that time was "something that is always with you." Another child said that it is "every moment of every living thing."

The children becoming conscious of the word *time* eventually expanded the idea that a word can have many meanings. Often we discussed other words, some

Mr. Stone is a fifth grade teacher in the Kensington School, Great Neck, N. Y.

chosen by the children, others by the teacher. We had fun, for example with the word *imagination*. Some of the things the children said about the word were, "where anything can happen," "pictures in your mind," "giving wings to your mind," "thinking of the impossible," "seeing ahead in life," "bringing the far near," "making ugly things beautiful," and "helps make the world interesting."

In talking about the word *music* we expressed these ideas: "a way to tell a story," "brings different thoughts to everyone," "puts one in the mood to think," "romance," "vibrations," "pictures in sound."

What is a word? Is it simply a sound, a report, an idea? The children learned that words are symbols, that at best they are often inadequate to express many of

our thoughts, and that we can prevent misunderstanding and prejudice if we approach language with an open mind. We found, citing an example, that the word *baby* had one meaning when spoken by a mother, and a much different connotation when shouted by one child to another on the playground.

That we bring a personal and cultural approach to our language is obvious. It is however not a difficult idea for eleven year olds to understand if approached from the viewpoint described above. We owe it to our children to make them the masters of their own language and not to create the stereotyped thinking which rules too easily over the minds of children who have not had the opportunity to discover the real magic of words.

GAITHER MCCONNELL

Criteria For Juvenile Biographies

Studies tracing the history or development of English and American biography indicate that during the past thirty years remarkable changes in methods and materials of life-writing have appeared. Biography has become one of the most popular literary forms.

Changes in the type of life-writing have made possible the writing of biographies interesting to children, and biography has reached a high level of popularity in the field of children's literature (15). In response to the current demand for juvenile biographies, many new biographies are appearing on the market. An examination of some of the standards set up by critics and writers in the field of adult biography that specialists in the field of children's literature think should be applied to

biographies for children should be of value and interest to those who deal with the selection of books for children.

A consensus as to the requisites for good biography and its essential purpose is found among writers in both the adult and children's fields, in spite of the vast differences of opinions concerning the intricacies of forms and technical details of methods of life-writing. A study of the definitions given in several

Dr. McConnell is Associate Professor and Head of the Department of Education, Newcomb College, Tulane University, New Orleans, Louisiana. The research here reported was carried on with the aid of the Berneta Minkwitz National Scholarship of Delta Kappa Gamma, Honor Society in Education.

sources indicates an almost complete agreement that three fundamental features are requisites of all biography. The three essentials are: truth, individuality, and art. They are embodied in the definition in the *Oxford English Dictionary*: "the history of the lives of individual men as a branch of literature."

The requisites, as Arbuthnot (1) suggests, not only define biography but indicate standards by which it should be judged. Opinions of specialists in the fields of adult and juvenile biographies, concerning questions in these three areas, can be grouped under the following headings:

1. Subjects (individuality).
2. Methods and materials (art).
3. Authenticity (truth).

1. Subjects

Type of subject

What type of subject is most suitable for a biography for adults or for children? There is remarkable, although not complete, agreement among the writers and specialists in the field as to one general type, and the descriptive word used most often for that type of person is "great." The word itself is not defined by any source, but it is elaborated upon, and, at times, more definite specifications for the "great" subject are set forth. Other statements require the subject to be heroic, special, vital, or to appeal to the imagination.

A minority group of writers think that the subject may be chosen from any walk of life, and that "small" men make as good subjects as "great" men. The problem of presenting a "small" man in proper proportion and still making his life interesting is discussed by Eaton (2) and Longaker (9).

A life colorful and dramatic enough to appeal to young people and presented in such a way as to give the reader the feeling of sharing in the daring adventure is the type of life subject that Hollowell (5) feels should be written about for children. She points out that

recent biography presents the lives of people in any walk of life, whereas early biography concerned itself with persons of high rank.

The type of person most often described as the most desirable subject for a biography is a great man with a heroic streak, dominated by some ideal purpose, whose life is continuously dramatic and colorful enough to sustain interest, and who appeals to the imagination. As Eaton says, "You cannot write about a prig or a stuffed shirt" (2:777). Trease (17) and Eaton (2), both authors of juvenile biographies, believe that many great people have a repellent side that should not be presented to children. Since biography should not be afraid of frailty and should present flesh-and-blood heroes, it is suggested that vivid figures, without dark shadows, should be selected as the central figures for biographies for children. Trease (17) says that the most odious, mean, and dull must be ruled out as subjects for juvenile biographies.

Presentation of the subject in biographies

Important as the selection of a subject may be, the manner in which he is presented in the life is of even greater significance. There is fairly general adherence to the belief that the whole truth about a person's life should be presented. His characteristics should be neither distorted nor suppressed; both his virtues and shortcomings should be revealed. A man's responses to his fellows and his attitudes toward personal possessions reveal some of his characteristics and make him more real to a person reading his life in the opinion of Edgar Johnson (6). The biographer must find out what others have thought of the subject, and what part he has played in their lives.

"Debunking" is generally disapproved in biographies for young people. Hollowell says that of the two extremes—emphasis on virtues only or over-emphasis on failures—"the latter is worse than the former for young people, be-

cause it fails to establish the proper appreciation for the worth of human personality" (5:262). She thinks a good biographer should approach his subject with "warm sympathy and justice" and present a true and accurate picture of him.

Although adults should have the complete and true picture of a man, it is not generally agreed that it is always desirable for children. Trease (17) points out that sometimes "sexual-skeletons-in-the-cupboard" make it difficult or impossible to give children full length portraits of some great men.

Genevieve Foster (3), an author of juvenile biographies, is one of the few in the field who expresses a different point of view. She places the burden of responsibility on the author. She says that if the author sees a complex or confusing situation clearly enough, there will be no trouble in writing it simply and clearly enough for anyone of any age to understand.

2. Methods and Materials

Narrative and expository methods in biography

"The most significant development in modern biography," says Winwar, "has been to dramatize events and to 'personalize' the individual treated" (19:552). It is the opinion of Longaker (9) that, since biography is both life-writing and the study of personality, the narrative as well as the expository method of presentation should be used.

Among the juvenile biographers, the preference is for the narrative form. Eaton (2) feels that analytical biography is not suitable to the young mind; children like to see things work and love action. They glean their ideas of the person whose life is presented mainly from his actions and his deeds and not from detailed explanation and interpretation, often incomprehensible to them. Hollowell (5) explains that the use of the narrative form often results in a style resembling fiction, which makes for greater readability.

Fictional biography

When the narrative form is used, it may result in either fictional biography or biographical fiction. Fictional biography is generally accepted as desirable in juvenile biographies, "provided that the author is careful to do no violence to the facts or implications of the life presented in the biography" (18:319). Hoke and Lerman (4) speak of general approval of "intelligent fictionizing" of biographies for children among the fifteen authorities whose opinions they obtained concerning the present trends in juvenile biography. Trease (17) is in favor of "story-biography" for children. He feels that if the child is ready for the historical approach he can read adult biography.

A practice growing out of the fictionizing of biography which meets with disapproval in the adult field but is sanctioned, if properly used, in the juvenile field is the use of invented dialogue and the recounting of what goes on in the minds of the subjects. Trease (17) says that for children dialogue must be invented. Although it is reprehensible, historically speaking, the biographer must guess at times and must enter the mind of his subject, because of the persistent juvenile urge to identify himself with the hero. The opinion of Arbuthnot is that "dialogue based on facts, when it is written by a scholar and an artist, brings history to life, recreates living, breathing heroes, and makes a dramatic impression on children" (1:479).

Although there are some excellent examples of biographical fiction in both the adult and juvenile fields, it is more open to criticism than fictionalized biography. Many or even all of the events of the subject's life may be authentic, but the background and some of the situations and surrounding characters in the stories are exaggerated or based entirely on the author's imagination. These stories may arouse interest and, if recognized as fiction, may lead the reader to a more authentic life of the

subject, but there is danger of children accepting all that is read as true.

Use of concreteness and details in biography

A "great" man is humanized by the inclusion of homely details and little incidents in his life which are so revelatory of character. Modern biography is concerned with everything that can give a clearer idea of the subject: the tone of his voice, the style of his conversation, familiar gestures, physical aspects, as well as his special interests, habits and peculiarities.

Style

If biography is to be considered as literature, it must be written in a pleasing style and fit the subject matter and mood of the story. Geoffrey Trease asks, "does the young reader care two pence about style?" (17:35). Certainly theme, action, and character come first with children. It is difficult to determine how consciously aware and appreciative children are of well chosen forms of expression, but when it is observed how often a child will read the same book there is some indication that "something more than the plot is being absorbed" (17:35).

Period of life presented

There must be some selection of material unless the older type, the exhaustive complete life or life-and-times, biography is written; yet most critics and authors in the adult field agree that the life must be a complete account from birth to death. Among juvenile biographers, there is a difference of opinion as to the portion of the life that may be, or should be, presented. Genevieve Foster (3) feels that it is most important that a biography be a complete story, even if it is a short one and is for very young readers. She says that it is a mistake to slight the adult years because of fear that they will not be of interest to a child. Trease (17) explains that sometimes it may be

necessary to pass over the subject's early years quickly because of an absence of data concerning them. If, however, material is available, it is a sound principle in these story-biographies to allot a disproportionate space to the subject's early years "so that the reader is better able to achieve imaginative identification" (17:69). Sometimes it is wise, in Arbuthnot's opinion, to terminate a child's life of a subject before the tragedies and scandals begin. In that way the record need not be falsified—"it just does not continue long enough to catch up with sorrow" (1:474).

Environment and background material of biography

Among juvenile biographers, background or environment is regarded as important and necessary. The necessity for reconstructing the period and bringing to life not only the central figure but also the surrounding figures is stressed by specialists in juvenile literature (1, 4).

3. Authenticity

Truth

Truth is one of the essentials demanded by all critics and writers of biography. Since biography is defined as the history of a person's life, it should be as accurate, true, and authentic as research and human skill can make it (1, 5).

A reader would have to be a specialist in many fields to check personally the authenticity of all the biographies that he reads. If he has little previous knowledge of the subject, he must depend on the author's reputation for scholarship or signs of scholarly work. If he lacks those bases for judgment, O'Neill suggests that he "must depend on his intuition or on the good faith of his biographer" (14:16).

Nicolson (13) believes that biography should be as carefully documented as history. Arbuthnot (1) says that objective, verifiable reporting is desirable even for children; if, when young, they were trained to respect truthful and accurate accounts "as adults they

would be more critical of prejudiced or fictionalized biographies. A continuous acknowledgment of sources is a guarantee to the reader of the historical accuracy and the objectivity of a biography" (1:474). Longaker suggests that acknowledgment of the sources of material should be presented, at least, in an introductory note or an appendix, if not given in footnotes (9).

In a discussion of the perplexities of writing authentic biography for the young, Jeanette Eaton (2) says that impressions of a place or events connected with the subject have to be carefully authenticated; she advises travel to the locality to get "the feeling." Every detail of the setting must be exact, and one can gain much insight by an actual visit to places where the subject lived.

Summary

The three essentials of both adult and juvenile biography are truth, individuality, and art. The most desirable subject for a biography is a great person with a heroic streak, dominated by some ideal purpose, whose life is continuously dramatic and colorful enough to sustain interest, and who appeals to the imagination. Although adults should have the complete and true picture of a man, it is not generally agreed that children should have complete information.

Narrative form is preferred, and "intelligent fictionizing" and invented dialogue are widely approved for juvenile biographies. Concreteness and revealing detail and pleasing style, suitable to the subject matter and mood of the story, should be used in all biographies.

Objective, verifiable reporting is desirable even for children; an acknowledgment of the sources of the material in some place, even if not in footnotes, is advocated.

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The Educational Scene

Edited by WILLIAM A. JENKINS¹



William A. Jenkins

The First Annual Meeting
of the International Reading Association

Morrison Hotel, Chicago, May 11-12

The officers and Board of Directors extend a very cordial invitation to members of the Association, and all others who are interested, to attend this meeting. It is planned to serve two purposes.

Through the very generous cooperation of more than seventy leaders in the field of reading some of the most challenging problems which are faced today in teaching reading will be vigorously discussed. The general sessions will define the nature of the problems to be considered and will set forth basic principles underlying their solution. Special sections will apply the latter to the problems faced by teachers and school officers at all levels. The proposals made by speakers will be considered carefully by discussants and those in the audience. As a result of the sharing of experiences and the pooling of judgments a clearer understanding of current issues will be secured and the foundation laid for the improvement of reading in all of its varied aspects.

The second purpose of the meeting is to provide opportunity to consider in detail the challenging purposes, opportunities and problems faced by the Association. Through discussion carried on in the Assembly by representatives from local and intermediate councils, it is hoped that plans can be developed for an era of increasing service and effectiveness on the part of the Association.

The Theme of the Program—Better Readers for Our Times

Friday A. M., May 11

General Session

"The Role of Reading in Developing Today's Children and Youth"

Nila B. Smith, School of Education and Director, The Reading Institute, New York University

"The Demand That Current Life Makes on Its Readers"

John J. DeBoer, School of Education, University of Illinois

Sectional Meetings

"Nature and Scope of Reading Programs Adapted to Today's Needs"

1. In the Primary Grades

Speaker: Gertrude H. Hildreth, Brooklyn College, Brooklyn, New York

¹Wisconsin State College, Milwaukee.

Discussants: *Althea Berry*, Supervisor, Elementary Education, Cincinnati, Ohio
Kathleen B. Hester, Michigan State Normal College, Ypsilanti, Mich.

2. In the Middle Grades

Speaker: *Helen Huus*, School of Education, University of Pennsylvania

Discussants: *Eleanor Johnson*, Director of School Services, Wesleyan University
Middeton, Conn.

Mary Shaw, Principal, Willard School, Evanston, Illinois

3. In the Upper Grades and Junior High School

Speaker: *William D. Sheldon*, Director, Reading Laboratory, Syracuse University

Discussants: *Edwin H. Colbarb*, Curriculum Coordinator, Junior High Schools,
Board of Education, City of New York

Mildred C. Letton, Department of Education, University of Chicago

4. In Senior High Schools

Speaker: *Isabelle Kincheloe*, English Department, Chicago Teachers College

Discussants: *David L. Shepherd*, Secondary Reading Consultant, Public Schools,
Norwalk, Connecticut

Phyllis Bland, English Department, Evanston High School, Evanston,
Illinois

5. In Colleges

Speaker: *Mark Ashin*, The College, The University of Chicago

Discussants: *Edgar L. DeForest*, Director, Reading Improvement Services,
Michigan State University

Donald L. Cleland, Director, Reading Laboratory, University of
Pittsburgh

6. In Grades Kindergarten—XII (For Administrative and Supervisory Officers)

Speaker: *LaVerne Strong*, Curriculum Consultant, State Department of Education,
Hartford, Connecticut

Discussants: *Inez Gingerich*, Director, Elementary Education, Enid, Oklahoma.
Amelia Traenkenshub, Assistant Superintendent in charge of curriculum
and instruction, Rock Island, Illinois.

Friday Afternoon, May 11

General Session

"Progress Achieved Thus Far in Developing Better Readers," *Mary C. Austin*, Graduate School of Education, Harvard University

"Challenging Problems Still to Be Faced," *Luella B. Cook*, President, National Council of Teachers of English

Sectional Meetings

"Controversial Issues and Unsolved Problems"

1. "The Need for and Nature of a Reading Readiness Program"

Speaker: *Aileen C. Norton*, Principal, Jonathan Burr School, Chicago

Discussants: *Edith Jay*, Psychology Department, Wayne University

Lilian Paukner, Elementary Supervisor, Milwaukee Public Schools

2. "Grouping and Promotion in Relation to Progress in Reading"

Speaker: *Albert J. Harris*, Educational Clinic, Queens College, New York

Discussants: *Margaret A. Robinson*, Principal, Pauline Avenue School, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

C. H. Pygman, Superintendent of Schools, Maywood, Illinois

3. "When and How Word Attack Skills Should Be Taught"

Speaker: *A. S. Artle*, Director, Child Study Clinic, University of Missouri

Discussants: *Lilian Fletcher*, Child Study Department, Board of Education, Chicago

Ethel S. Maney, Reading Consultant, Deleware County, Media, Pa.

4. "Providing Reading Materials Appropriate to Interest and Maturity Levels"

Speaker: *Ruth Strang*, Teachers College, Columbia University

Discussants: *Jeanne Chall*, Reading Clinic, The City College, New York

Lilian M. Hinds, Reading Coordinator, Public Schools, Euclid, O.

5. "Responsibility for and Methods of Promoting Growth in Reading in Content Fields"

Speaker: *Leo Fay*, School of Education, Indiana University

Discussants: *Dorothy Kendall Bracken*, Director, Reading Clinic, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas

George Mallison, Western Michigan College of Education, Kalamazoo, Michigan

6. "Developing Higher Levels of Reading Competence"

Speaker: *Arthur I. Gates*, Teachers College, Columbia University

Discussants: *Joseph Mersand*, Chairman, English Department, Jamaica High School, New York

7. "How Can We Secure Parent Cooperation"

Speaker: *Nancy Larrick*, Education Director, Random House Children's Books, New York

Discussants: *Mrs. Charlemae Rollins*, Children's Librarian, Chicago Public Library
Jewell Askew, President, Texas Reading Association, Houston, Texas.

8. "Improving the Quality of Reading Instruction Throughout the Grades and High School" (for Administrative and Supervisory Officers)

Speaker: *Earle W. Wilse*, Superintendent, Grand Island, Nebraska

Discussants: *Thaddens Lubera*, Associate Superintendent in Charge of Curriculum and Instruction (North Division), Chicago Public Schools

Algard Whitney, School of Education, University of Illinois.

4:15 - 5:30 P.M.

Reception for officers, members of the Board of Directors of I.R.A. and all attending the meeting by the officers and members of the Chicago Council

Friday Evening, May 11

"Can Television Aid in the Teaching of Reading?"

"Why Television Is Being Considered As an Aid in Teaching." *Alfred Beattie*, Supt of Schools, Alleghany County, Pittsburg, Pa.

"The Preparation of Telecasts for Use in Basal Reading Instruction." *Rhea Sikes*, Producer of Total Teaching Demonstration, W.Q.E.D., Metropolitan Pittsburg Educational Station.

"The Presentation and Discussion of a Lesson." *Stella Nardozza*, Television Teacher of Total Teaching Demonstration, W.Q.E.D., Metropolitan Pittsburg Educational Station.

"The Values or Effects, as Observed in Classrooms." *Margaret McKee*, Elementary Supervisor, Alleghany County, Pittsburgh, Pa.

Saturday Morning, May 12

General Session

"Why Many Children and Youth Are Retarded in Reading," *Anne McKillop*, Associate Professor of Education, Teachers College, Columbia University

ELEMENTARY ENGLISH

Sectional Meetings

"Classroom Methods in Identifying and Diagnosing the Needs of Retarded Readers"
In Elementary Schools

Speaker: *Katherine Torrant*, Reading Consultant, Division of Counselling Services,
Public Schools, Newtonville, Mass.

Discussants: *Josephine A. Piekarz*, Director, Reading Clinic, University of
South Carolina

Anne E. Price, General Consultant, Elementary School, St. Louis, Mo.

In High Schools and Colleges

Speaker: *George D. Spache*, Reading Laboratory and Clinic, University of Florida

Discussants: *Marvin D. Glock*, School of Education, Cornell University

Francis Triggs, Chairman, Committee on Diagnostic Reading Tests,
New York

"Classroom Methods in Correcting Reading Deficiencies"

In Elementary Schools

Speaker: *Sister M. Julitta, O.S.F.*, Director, Reading Clinic, Cardinal Stritch College

Discussants: *E. Elona Sochor*, Director of Reading Clinic, Temple University

Grace Walby, Child Guidance Clinic, Winnipeg, Canada

In High Schools and Colleges

Speaker: *Elizabeth A. Simpson*, Director, Reading Service, Institute for Psychological
Services, Illinois Institute of Technology, Chicago

Discussants: *Phillip Shaw*, Supervisor of The Reading and Study Program, Brooklyn
College

H. Alan Robinson, District Coordinator of Reading Services, Central High
School, Valley Stream, New York

"Improving the Reading Ability of Gifted Pupils"

Speaker: *Paul Witty*, School of Education, Northwestern University

Discussants: *Dorothy C. Estabrook*, Jane Slenson School, Evanston, Illinois

Miriam Norton, Provincial Normal School, Winnipeg, Canada.

"Clinical Procedures in Diagnosing Seriously Retarded Readers"

Speaker: *Helen Robinson*, Department of Education, University of Chicago

Discussants: *Muriel Potter Langman*, Associate Professor of Education, Michigan State
Normal College, Ypsilanti, Michigan

Ullin Leavell, Director, McGuffey Reading Clinic, University of Virginia

"Remedial Procedures for Seriously Retarded Readers"

Speaker: *Ralph C. Staiger*, Director, Reading Clinic, Mississippi Southern College, Hattiesburg, Mississippi

Discussants: *Marion Kingsbury*, Director, Remedial Education Center, Washington, D. C.
Ruth H. Solomon, Director, Albany Center for Learning Disabilities, Albany, New York

"Administrative Steps in Providing for Retarded Readers"

Speaker: *Paul Misner*, Superintendent of Schools, Glencoe, Illinois, and President of American Association of School Administrators

Discussants: *Lucille Berkel*, Principal, Madison School, St Louis, Mo.
William Edward Dolch, Emeritus Professor of Education, University of Illinois

Nancy Larrick, President Elect of IRA, presiding

"The Role and Challenge of IRA," *William S. Gray*, President

"The Organization and Direction of Councils," *Mary Austin*, School of Education, Harvard University

"Vitalizing Council Programs and Activities," *William D. Sheldon*, Director, Reading Laboratory, Syracuse University, Syracuse, N. Y.

Luncheon Meeting

(Annual Meeting of Board of Representatives will follow the luncheon)

Saturday P. M.

Sectional Meetings

"How the Conference Proposals Can Be Implemented"

1. In the Primary Grades

Leader: *Margaret McKim*, Teachers College, University of Cincinnati

2. In the Middle Grades

Leader: *Gertrude Whipple*, Wayne University and Supervisor of Language Arts, Detroit Public Schools

3. In the Upper Grades and Junior High School

Leader: *Nancy Young*, Curriculum Consultant, Bureau of Curriculum, Board of Education, City of New York

4. In Senior High Schools

Leader: *Low LaBrant*, School of Education, University of Kansas City

5. In Colleges

Leader: *James M. McCallister*, Dean, Woodrow Wilson Branch, Chicago City Junior College

6. Throughout School Systems

Leader: *Dorothy C. Cook*, Supervisor of Elementary Education, State Education Department, Albany, New York

Directions for registering for the meeting will be forwarded by mail to all members early in April. Others may make application of Dr. Donald Cleland, Executive Secretary of IRA, Reading Laboratory, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Registration fee for members is \$2.00 and for all others is \$4.00. Those planning to attend are advised to register in advance. Hotel reservations should be made at once by writing to the Morrison Hotel, Chicago, Ill.

The young reader

Possibly the most radical and the most constructive of the numerous replies to the critics of reading we have come across was that given by Frank G. Jennings in an address to the 23rd Annual Convention of the Book Manufacturers' Institute last winter. Mr. Jennings' talk was called "Hidden Hungers: The Care and Feeding of the Young Reader."

While not ignoring the teacher's share of the blame for the present state of reading, Mr. Jennings throws a good part of it back to the editors, publishers, and ad-men. Their attention has been directed, and with considerable success, at the child and the adult. The job of creating and marketing books for children has been extremely successful—the children's department supports some publishing firms. The adult market, while not what a publisher dreams of, is healthy, too.

It is the adolescent market which has been neglected, spoon-fed, and, even, destroyed. If Johnny can't read, said Mr. Jennings, it is not all his fault or the fault of his teachers. And if Johnny, the adult, can't or won't read, it is because the gap between his childhood years

when he wanted to read and had a wealth of good materials to choose from was not bridged to his adult years with books that met his abilities, interests, and habits. As an adolescent, materials available to him did not challenge, stimulate, or satisfy him.

The adolescent has been neglected simply on the basis of what is offered to him. Only a small part of the several thousands of new books are for him alone, Television and television commercials insult him, for he is highly critical, but there is nothing to take their place. Adult books about real things have to be censored, withheld, expurgated, or simplified. If there is any time left after the pile of required reading is gone through, his huge appetite to know has to be satisfied with the inane, the dull, the dolls of humanity. We seem embarrassed to let him know what kind of world we adults have to offer him. Perhaps it is a poor offering, but the adolescent wants to know what people do with their lives and what he can do with his.

We insult his intelligence, too, with what we *require* him to read. Out of books with "gay and handsome" bindings, with large, com-

fortable, baby type, replete with pastel illustrations, we lead him into the lives of disgustingly wholesome people, and sickening teenagers with imitation teen-talk.

The solution, in Mr. Jennings' thinking, lies, first, in adolescent readers' being given books about real people: heroes; people of flesh and blood rather than caricatures and shadows; and the stuff of life—tragedy, irony, defeat. With these the adolescent will regain his respect in being treated as a human being, in being treated as the adult he sometimes is. In the second place, reading must regain its position in the adolescent community. This can be done if those who make the books and those who offer them can convince the adolescent reader that he is important and that what he reads is important. He reads the ads; he knows that at this time he is just second-rate, just small fry in the eyes of the publishers and the ad-men.

"Hidden Hungers" is available free in a reprint pamphlet. Write to Book Manufacturers' Institute, Inc., 25 West 43rd Street, New York 36. Mr. Jennings' ideas, much the same but expanded, have appeared in an article, "That Johnny May Read," in the *Saturday Review* for February 4, 1956. Both pieces are worth your most concentrated efforts.



Children's literature awards

National Mass Media Awards in the field of Children's Books for 1955 were presented in February by the Thomas Alva Edison Foundation.

His Indian Brother by Hazel Wilson, Abingdon Press, received the Foundation's award as "The Best Children's Book for Character Development" (for younger children).

The Boy Scientist by John Lewellen, Simon and Schuster, won "The Best Children's Science Book" award (for younger children).

The Buffalo Trace by Virginia S. Eifert, Dodd, Mead, and Company, won the award for

"The Youth Book Best Portraying America's Past."

Scrolls were presented to the winning publishers and authors. In addition, each winning author received a prize of \$250.

This month the Edison Foundation will present awards to "The Best American History Comic Book," "The Best Children's Comic Book" (for children over eight years of age), and "The Best Science Comic Book."

The Edison Foundation presented its awards to the films and television and radio programs that best fulfilled the objectives of the National Mass Media Awards Program in December.



Golden Book calendar

The Golden Calendar 1956, by John Peter with pictures by Richard Scarry, from Simon and Schuster, is very attractive. Storybook characters welcome each month, a saying, a question, or a holiday note is given for each day, and each month's significance is explained briefly. In a riot of colors, the calendar is a good buy at fifty cents. Write to the publisher at 630 Fifth Avenue, New York 20.

To the well-known Big and Giant Golden Books, Simon and Schuster has added a Golden-craft line with cloth bindings. The latest listing is also available from the publisher upon request.



New book on language

Our Language by Eloise Lambert. Lothrop, Lee and Shepard. \$3. 181pp. *Our Language* is the story of the geography, the history, and the use of words. In a highly readable, non-technical fashion, Miss Lambert presents a very informative discussion of how English grew, the myriad forces and cultures which have left their imprints on it, the gifts and thefts from other Indo-European languages, and the kinship among the languages of the world.

More important in this reader's opinion is her section on "How to Use Words." Jargon, connotation, slang, and punctuation are among the topics which are briefly noted and explored.

Our Language is not a volume for the specialist in language, for he probably will be beyond its depth. For the everyday user or for the person who wants to know more about the wonderful gift of tongues and to become more fluent in his employment of it, the book has much to say, and says it well.



Library booklet

Your Library by Richard J. Hurley, published by the Catholic University of America Press (620 Michigan Avenue, N.E., Washington 17), explains how an elementary school library should be organized. Questions such as how to use student help and how to promote book use are answered clearly and helpfully. Of special note to parochial schools which are organizing a library is the graded list of "Two Hundred Books for the Catholic Elementary School."

Order from the Catholic University Press. Price \$1.



Radio-TV workshop

A two-week radio and television workshop, open to teachers with no previous training in school broadcasting, will be held at Stroudsburg, Pa., in the Pocono Mountains, this summer. Two sessions will meet: July 30-August 11 and August 12-25. For further information write to Gretta Baker, Manager's Office, Penn-Stroud Hotel, Stroudsburg, Pa.



Syllaboscope

A new device for teaching word analysis, the Syllaboscope, has been developed by the Wordcrafters Guild. Available in two sizes, teacher and pupil, the Syllaboscope permits the

student to isolate initial blends in words, cover the affixes to study roots, or cover roots to set apart affixes. A set of 302 words, 3" x 9" each (Kottmeyer), can be obtained for use with either size of the device, as can the Dolch 220 Basic Sight Word set. Teacher Syllaboscopes cost \$2.50. For a descriptive price list, write to Wordcrafters Guild, St. Albans, Washington 16, D. C.



Word study filmstrips

The Word Study Series, six new filmstrips produced by Young America Films (18 East 41st Street, New York 17; \$30 per set of six; \$6 each), offers help to English teachers who would like to give junior and senior high school students definite, interesting material dealing with the study of words. In this series, the filmstrip "Keys to Word Building" shows how words are built by means of roots, prefixes and suffixes; "Synonyms, Antonyms, Homonyms, and Heteronyms" helps students to understand and to use related words; "Word Meanings Change" demonstrates how words have changed their meanings; "Unusual Word Origins" presents many of the picturesque origins of words; "Words Derived from Latin and Greek" helps the students to understand how Latin and Greek have contributed to our English language; and "Words Derived from Other Languages" shows how many of our present day words have come to us directly from Spanish Italian and many other languages. Hardy R. Finch and Ruth N. Macoy were the authors and advisors for this new filmstrip series.



New recordings

The Wheel on the School, a 12" LP recordings adapted from the Newbery prize book by Meindert DeJong (Harper, 1954), has just been released by a new organization, Newbery Award Records, 221 Fourth Avenue,

New York 3. The recording is the first in a series which will dramatize those books which have earned the American Library Associations award "for the most distinguished contribution to American literature for children."

Each recording will appear with a booklet of teaching aids: background of the recording, key ideas in the story, music and sound effects, vocabulary, and pre-listening and follow-up activities. We shall review this record in next month's column.

The 500 Hats of Bartholomew Cubbins by Dr. Seuss is read by Paul Wing on a new Camden release (subsidiary of RCA-Victor). Camden has also released a dramatization of *A Christmas Carol*.



Reading conference

The Second Annual Conference on Reading at Concordia College, Moorhead, Minnesota, has been scheduled for June 18-22. The main speakers for the five-day conference will be Emmett A. Betts and Carolyn M. Welch of the Betts Reading Clinic, Haverford, Pa., and P. A. Killgallon, director, The Reading Clinic, University of Oregon.

The theme of the Conference is "Basic Essentials in Reading," and demonstrations, lectures, panel discussions, and group discussions will center on the problems of individual differences, reading inventories, phonics, word perception, interests, and comprehension.

Further information may be obtained from Walther G. Prausnitz, Head, English Department, Concordia College, Moorhead, Minnesota.



Film footage for education

The NBC Film Library, which with its present total of 21 million feet of catalogued film is the largest and most comprehensive source of film footage in the TV industry, has announced a special rate for the sale of stock footage for educational purposes. The move

was made by the Library in recognition of the limitation on most educational budgets.

For additional information, organizations in TV film footage for educational purposes may contact Frank Kelly, Chief Librarian, NBC Film Library, 105 East 106th Street, New York 29.



A-V use increases

Audio-Visual Education in Urban School Systems, a 1954 survey, indicated that the median appropriation for audio-visual education between 1946 and 1954 rose from 33 cents per pupil to 65 cents. The survey also reported that 25 percent of our classrooms are well adapted for the use of audio-visual techniques; 41 percent are poorly adapted; and 34 percent are completely unadapted for the use of audio-visual teaching tools. Use of instructional motion pictures rose from 175 to 566 per 1000 pupils between 1946 and 1954, while filmstrips used per 1000 pupils increased from 208 to 800. The number of sound motion picture projectors rose from 1.0 to 2.4 per 1000 pupils, while filmstrip projectors increased from 1.3 to 3.6.

The survey is available from the NEA, 1201 Sixteenth Street, N. W., Washington 6. Price 50 cents.



Send for

Free and Inexpensive Learning Materials. Seventh edition; Designed to help the teacher, pupil, and librarian collect current sources of information which are free or inexpensive. Order from Division of Surveys and Field Services, George Peabody College for Teachers, Nashville, Tenn. 244 pp. \$1.

Recommended Recordings for Schools and Libraries. A catalog prepared by music educators of the Children's Music Center of Los Angeles which is free to audio-visual directors, curriculum coordinators, and music supervisors through their local Califone dealer. Order

from Califone Corporation, 1041 North Sycamore Ave., Hollywood 38, Calif. 40 pp. \$.50.

Books of the Year for Children. The current annual booklist of the Child Study Association of America. Order from the Association at 132 East 74th Street, New York 21. Price \$.25.

How to Apply for a Summer Job. Information on the types of organizations throughout the United States that seek extra help during the summer months and a list of more than 150 kinds of jobs that may be found in such organizations. Includes suggested information for a letter of application. One copy to a teacher; not available after May 1. Order from State Teachers Magazines, Inc., Dept. A, 307 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago 1. Enclose three cents.

The Recording as a Teaching Tool. A compilation of articles on the use of records in the classroom from kindergarten through college. The pamphlet suggests uses to which the great variety of recordings can be put. Order from State Teachers Magazines, Inc., Dept. A, 307 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago 1. Enclose three cents.

Children's Reading Service Audio-Visual Catalog. An annotated list of phonograph records, filmstrips, tape recordings, and books on music. Children's Reading Service, 1078 St. John's Place, Brooklyn 13, N. Y.

The Tape Recorder in the Elementary Classroom. A 60-page illustrated handbook for teachers. Order from Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing Company, 900 Fauquier St., St. Paul 6, Minn.

Audio-Visual Aids 1955-56. A catalog of filmstrips and records for elementary and high schools. Write to Filmstrip House, 15 West 46th St., New York 36. 24 pp.

Catalog of Recorded Tape and Catalog of Children's Records. Write to M & N Harrison, Inc., 274 Madison Ave., New York 16.

Let's Go to Press. A handbook designed to help educators recognize and get into print newsworthy school stories. Order from National School Public Relations Association, 1201 Sixteenth St., N. W., Washington 6. 48 pp. \$1.

Give Children Literature by Leland Jacobs. Curriculum Letter No. 20, Department of School Services and Publications, Wesleyan University, Middleton, Conn. A four-page discussion of literature as the heart of the curriculum for grades 1-6.



Junior Literary Guild

Here are the Guild selections for April:

For boys and girls 5 and 6 years old:

Doki, the Lonely Papoose by Mariana Lothrop, Lee and Shepard, \$2.50.

For boys and girls 7 and 8 years old:

Somebody Called Booie by Lillian Gardner Watts, \$2.50.

For boys and girls 9, 10, and 11 years old:

Golden Mare by William Corbin. Coward-McCann, \$2.75.

For girls 12 to 16 years old:

Promise of June by Nancy Paschal. Thomas Nelson, \$2.75.

For boys 12 to 16 years old:

Carry on, Mr. Bowditch by Jean Lee Latham. Houghton Mifflin, \$2.75.



In other magazines

The Reading Teacher (International Reading Association, Reading Clinic, University of Pittsburgh 13) for February is concerned with "Literature for Children and Youth." *Childhood Education* (Association for Childhood Education International, 1200 15th Street, N. W., Washington 5) discusses tools for knowing more about the child, "What a Child Values."

BOOKS FOR CHILDREN



May Hill Arbuthnot

Edited by MAY HILL ARBUTHNOT

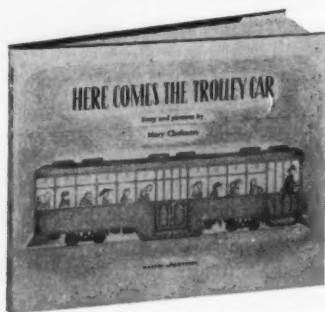
Mrs. Arbuthnot is well-known as a writer and lecturer in the field of children's literature. She is the author of CHILDREN AND BOOKS (Scott, Foresman, 1947) and three anthologies, combined in the single volume. THE ARBUTHNOT ANTHOLOGY (Scott, Foresman, 1953).

MARGARET MARY CLARK reviews books of science, social studies, and biography. Miss Clark is head of the Lewis Carroll Room, Cleveland Public Library, and editor of ADVENTURING WITH BOOKS (National Council of Teachers of English, 1950).

Picture-Stories

Here Comes the Trolley Car. Written and illustrated by Mary Chalmers. Harper, 1955. \$2.00. (3-5).

Here is another little fable told without moralizing. Everybody who boarded the little



trolley car that morning was intent on what he or she was going to do. But when the car broke down, right beside a park, and two sailors suggested a picnic, suddenly there was plenty of time. People began to enjoy the sunny day and each other. Everyone was actually

sorry when the little trolley was repaired and there was nothing to do but go on where you were going and do what you meant to do. The soft gray pencil sketches are as charming as the little tale itself.

A

Crow Boy. Written and illustrated by Taro Yashima. Viking, 1955. \$2.75 (4-8).

After *The Village Tree* and *Plenty to Watch* we have come to expect books of sensitive perceptiveness from Mr. Yashima. This is the best of his three books, the story of an odd, lonely little boy who was nicknamed "Chibi" (tiny one) in derision by the other children, who shunned him. Then a new teacher discovered that Chibi knew much about flowers and where the wild grapes grew and all the strange calls of crows. Be-



Margaret Mary Clark

cause of his talent for imitating crows he won the name "Crow Boy," which was spoken not in derision but with admiration and love. This is a simple, touching story, for children can be cruel to each other and adults can be blind. Any classroom may have its lonely little Chibi. The striking use of color in these pictures, the flowing lines, and rhythmic massing of color move with the words. It is a gentle story, with great visual beauty.

A

Mrs. Perrywinkle's Pets. By Jane Thayer. Illustrated by Paul Galdone. Morrow, 1955. \$2.00 (4-8).

Mrs. Perrywinkle chose two cats and a dog from the pet shop, took them home with high hopes, and named them Gallagher, Ginsburg,



Mrs. Perrywinkle's Pets

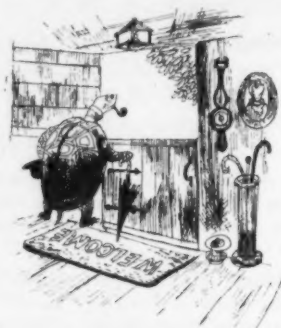
and Sam. But when Mrs. Perrywinkle wanted to sit down, Sam was in her chair. When she had steak, Ginsburg got it, and so it went until she was about ready to return her pets to the pet shop. Then her neighbor told her a secret which worked like a charm. Her pets behaved and loved her more than ever. Not until the last page is the secret revealed. Every household should know it, and it makes the children chuckle.

A

Theodore Turtle. By Ellen MacGregor. Illustrated by Paul Galdone. Whittlesey House, 1955. \$2.00. (4-8).

The death of Ellen MacGregor, creator of *Miss Pickerell*, was a real loss to children's

books. This little posthumous picture-story is quite different from her other tales. Theodore Turtle started all his troubles when he dropped one of his four rubbers on the attic stairs.



Theodore Turtle

By the time he had found that rubber he had forgotten where he left the other three. So he mislaid his newspaper, alarm clock, and a lot of other necessities. Theodore was forever encouraging himself with, "Wasn't I clever to think of that?" But when at the conclusion of his misadventures he remarked, "I am so clever . . . so very clever!" one astute six-year-old said, "That's what *he* thinks!" The delightful pictures show fascinating details of Theodore Turtle's house and domestic arrangements. Children are always discovering fine new touches in Theodore's rooms, especially his kitchen.

A

The Amiable Giant. Written and illustrated by Louis Slobodkin. Macmillan, 1955. \$2.75. (6-10).

Even if children miss the obvious allegory of *The Amiable Giant*, they will enjoy the rousing story told with sly humor and colorful pictures. This book, both text and illustrations, are Mr. Slobodkin at his rollicking best. The story concerns an amiable giant who wished to make friends with the villagers living at the foot of his mountain. But they were so sure that the giant wanted to gobble them up that

they all ran for cover when he approached and stopped up their ears so they could not hear a word he said. This made it possible for a black-hearted wizard to tell the townspeople that the giant demanded their cattle and their grain. These he stashed away for himself in a handy cave. So the villagers grew poorer, the wizard richer, and the giant lonelier. This might have gone on indefinitely if a little girl, left outside by accident, had not heard what the giant really said and reported his good intentions to her father. Speedy justice descended on the wicked wizard, and lasting friendships began for the lonely and amiable giant. This gay parable will succeed with children of almost any age.

A

The Three Kings of Saba. By Alf Evers. Illustrated by Helen Sewell. Lippincott, 1955. \$2.50 (5—).



The Three Kings of Saba

When next Christmas comes, bring out this strange and powerful story of the three quarreling Kings who journeyed to the stable to see the newborn prophet. At first, each selfish King saw only himself, but as they gazed at the Child they were cleansed of self and in worship they found a new ideal of kingship—ruling together for the good of their people. Based on a bit of lore found in Marco Polo's records, Mr. Evers has told the story reverently and well. But the powerful portraits of the kings, done with a curious rock-like hardness in contrast to the tender portrayals of the Mother and Child, are exceptionally dramatic. These reach a superb climax when the Kings kneel humbly before Mary and the Babe. And the angry reds and orange, blacks and grays, of the first part of the story give way to strong purples and blues. Whether you like modern art or not, Helen

Sewell's pictures have strength and integrity.

A

Two Dogs and a Cat

Little Dog. By Ethelind Fearnor. Illustrated by Howard Simon. Lothrop, 1955. \$2.50. (8-12).

The Pluckrose children realized what the loss of their old sheep dog meant to their mother, and they were determined to give her a pup. A gypsy helped them to acquire a pure bred Shetland. Chessie, even as a pup, won their



Little Dog

mother's heart and Potty's too. This was important because Potty was their shepherd, and from the first day, Chessie showed him that sheep were her business. This is the story of a skilled shepherd, a highly individual family group, and a wee working dog of such prodigious intelligence and courage that she never let anything stop her until her task was completed. When she was stolen, Potty and the whole family were distraught. But the children found her, and when the case landed them in courts, Chessie and the children swept the Law right off his Loftiness in a heart-warming conclusion. A working dog and a working family make this a gallant story.

A

Marty and the Major. By Drury Maxine. Illustrated by Jeanne C. Manget. Little, 1955. \$2.50. (8-12).

Here is a good combination for children who like dog stories and mysteries. When a dignified and beautifully trained bull terrier walked into her life, Marty named him Major because of his military bearing. She lived in fear that someone would claim him, but no one did. If he had not been pure white and gentle as a lamb, Major would have been suspect, because a series of robberies nearby had been aided by a ferocious black dog. Then one



Marty and the Major

day to Marty's horror something proved the Major's capacity for a savage attack. Roger, the boy on the next farm, had a theory. Where had the Major come from? When that question was answered, the sinister mystery of the robberies was solved in a climax that is exciting and highly satisfactory to Marty and the Major.

A

Barn Cat. By Belle Coates. Illustrated by Robert Henneberger. Scribner's, 1955. \$2.25. (5-8).

This unpretentious little book may easily be overlooked in piles of bigger, brighter picture-stories, but it tells a substantial story.



Barn Cat.

Bud and Fuzz are convincing farm children and from the first day they find him in the barn,

the cat shows his character. As so often happens to cats, he had been callously left behind when his family moved away. But he had the good sense to find another farm with a warm, tight barn and the good luck to strike an animal-loving family. Everyone was amused by the way cat chose the softest cow in the barn to sleep on and made no move to come into the house. When he did finally come to the kitchen door, it was not for food, but on a heroic errand that proved his intelligence and courage. It also won him his name "Barn Cat," which the family spoke with respect and affection. The pictures in orange-brown with black and white are as warm and homey as this family and Barn Cat himself.

A

A Miscellany of Distinguished Books

Sing a Song of Seasons. Poems About Holidays, Vacation Days, and Days to Go to School. Selected by Sara and John E. Brewton. Decorations by Vera Bock. Macmillan, 1955. \$3.50. (5-12).

Sara and John Brewton are admirable anthologists for children. They have never made a poor or commonplace collection of verses. Numerically, they are fairly generous. This one

has over two hundred poems, while many \$3.50 anthologies are offering round a hundred. The bulk of the Brewton selections are from the modern poets and maintain a high quality of poetic values. These virtues are not as usual with anthologists as they should be. This collection is especially good, with fresh and varied verses, from nonsense to sheer beauty. A summer lament for "Poison Ivy" is amusing. Laura Richards' "Why Does It Snow?" will



Sing a Song of Seasons

tickle the young children. It is good to find Frances Clarke Sayers' lovely "Who Calls?" Mrs. Sayers should give us more poetry, And not only is Walter de la Mare well represented, but such recent poets to childhood as Harry Behn, Ivy Eastwick, and David McCord. There are three indexes—by author, title, and first lines, and the handsome format and decorations by Vera Bock make the book a beautiful addition to school and home bookshelves.

A

The Heroes. By Charles Kingsley. Illustrated by Vera Bock. Macmillan, 1954. \$2.00. (8—).

Are we in danger of forgetting that childhood and youth should be fed on greatness if they are to dream great dreams and yearn towards achievements? One page of Charles Kingsley's *Heroes* might well counteract the leveling-down-to-mediocrity process that besets so much of our mass education and mass entertainment. Pallas Athene confronts Perseus with a choice of two ways of life—souls of clay that "fatten at ease, like sheep in the pasture, and eat what they did not sow like oxen in the stall . . . and when they are ripe death gathers them, and they go down unloved into hell, and their name vanishes out of the land. But to souls of fire I give more fire, and to those who are manful I give a might that is more than man's. For I drive them forth by strange paths, Perseus, that they may fight the Titans and the monsters, the enemies of Gods and men." There are still monsters to be conquered.

No one has ever translated the words and the inner significance of Greek myths with the power and beauty of Charles Kingsley, Victorian scholar and poet. Children should hear and read this classic, which is one of a series of *Children's Classics* Macmillan is issuing.

The dramatic and beautiful illustrations by Vera Bock add to its distinction and to the sense of the heroic that breathes from these pages.

A

The Borrowers Afield. By Mary Norton. Illustrated by Beth and Joe Krush. Harcourt, 1955. \$2.50. (8—).

Good news! The Clock family, last of the Borrowers, *did* escape. No ferret or fumes got them, for here they are perilously afield. Their house is a large, discarded boot; no elegance, no savory stews, and plenty of danger. Homily moans and laments but works like a worried beaver. Pod toils and maintains a cheerful front, but is secretly afraid. Only little, young Arrietty loves the sun, the little stream, the blue skies, the whole outdoor world she has never seen before. Then, she discovers another



The Borrowers Afield

tiny being—a very dirty boy called Spiller, who will tell them nothing about himself but befriends them. When they are finally captured by a huge human "bean" it is Spiller who rescues them. Their escape to new and elegant quarters is both thrilling and a complete surprise. Pod and Homily are perfectly happy. But what of Arrietty, in love with the new world of woods and brightness, unafraid of human "beans" and intrigued by Spiller?

Surely we must hear more of this intrepid pair. The pictures of the Clock trio and Spiller are as fascinating as the story, a kind of *Swiss Family Robinson* in miniature. But the final picture, of Arrietty slipping outdoors again, is a question mark like the story's conclusion. Oh, there must be more to come!

Social Studies

Connecticut, Kentucky, Maryland. By Bernadine Bailey. Illustrated by Kurt Wiese. (The United States Book Series). Whitman. \$1.25 each. (9-12).

With the addition of these three titles, there are now twenty eight individual state stories available to supplement social studies. Following a similar pattern, each title gives a



Connecticut, Kentucky, Maryland

brief summary of a state: its history, size, industries and resources, important events, places and personages, and each includes pictures of the state map, flag, bird and flower. There are illustrations on every page in black-and-white or color. The books, though unpagged, are about twenty six pages in length, are attractive in format, and give a good general picture of each state.

C

Harbors and Cargoes. Written and illustrated by Walter Buehr. Putnam, 1955. \$2.50. (9-13).

Harbors, whether natural or manmade, are vitally important to the successful loading and unloading of cargoes. Mr. Buehr traces the early harbor with its crude means of handling cargoes to the complex industry that it has

become today, with its variety of loading and unloading equipment, the types of ships that carry cargo, and tugboats that ease ships into the harbor. Several pages are devoted to the distribution of cargo in the hold of the ship and the types of cargoes carried. The presentation of this unusual material is excellent, and the black-and-white drawings are of unusual quality and clarity.

C

The Mississippi Bubble. By Thomas B. Costain. Illustrated by Warren Chappell. Random House. (Landmark Books). 1955. \$1.50. (11 and up).

During the early 1700's, the colonizing of New Orleans in the New World was used to create a fantastic financial swindle in France. While the little settlement was slowly growing, it was represented as fabulously rich, and promised great wealth to those who invested in its future. The French, both rich and poor, rushed to buy stock from the promoting company engineered by John Law. Contrasted in the tale are the heartbreaking efforts of Sieur de Bienville to establish the colony on a firm foundation, while in France, the stock soared to incredible heights, and finally left ruin in its wake for many. Strangely enough, the colonizing of New Orleans and Louisiana was hastened by the "Mississippi Bubble." This unusual chapter in American history is a rarely interesting one, told with distinction by a master-storyteller.

C

Manners To Grow On. By Tina Lee. Illustrated by Manning Lee. Doubleday, 1955. \$2.50. (6-12).

Youthful social behavior in almost every relationship with adults and peers is treated in this excellent book of manners presented in simple and unique form. There are some two dozen headings such as conversations, letters, table manners, how to enjoy your home, at school, etc., and highlighted in red print

are the topics represented under each heading. The material is practical and useful, and pre-



Manners To Grow On

sented in a matter-of-fact way, without moralizing, that should make it highly acceptable to all school-age children up to the teens. A comprehensive index gives the book quick reference use, and a series of review questions on manners would be helpful either to the adult guide or the child. Each page has sketches or diagrams in black-and-white and red which add to the book's attractiveness.

C

Great Men of The Sea. By Felix Riesenberg, Jr. Illustrated by Rus Anderson. Putnam, 1955. \$3.00. (11 and up).

From the earliest written account of a ship, the Ark of Noah, Mr. Riesenberg writes a fine introductory history of ships and great seamen. In his vivid narrative, ancient times, the period of discovery and exploration, the development of modern ships, and the importance of ships in two World Wars and today, are covered with a fine sense of continuity and relation to significant trends in history. The book gains color and tone from its wealth of unusual information and records of adventures at sea. An absorbing book for general reading, it also makes a contribution to the study of almost every period in history, and would serve

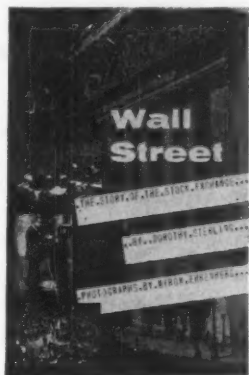
as a valuable supplement to social studies. There are many action filled drawings in black-and-white, and a detailed index.

C

Wall Street: The Story of The Stock Exchange.

By Dorothy Sterling. Illustrated with photographs by Myron Ehrenberg. Doubleday, 1955. \$2.75. (10-14).

"Just as you can go to market to buy a pound of hamburgers or a dozen oranges, so you can go to market to buy shares in a cor-



poration that manufactures television sets or mines uranium." Using logical parallels in terms of everyday experience, the author introduces the novice to the purpose and use of the stock market. The history of the New York and American Stock Exchanges from their modest beginnings, an explanation of how stocks are bought and sold, the various workers employed at the exchanges and their branches, the stock boards and other special equipment of the industry are described. The concrete presentation makes for lively and understandable reading about a highly important phase of American finance. There are excellent photographic illustrations and reproductions of both the early markets and those of today.

C

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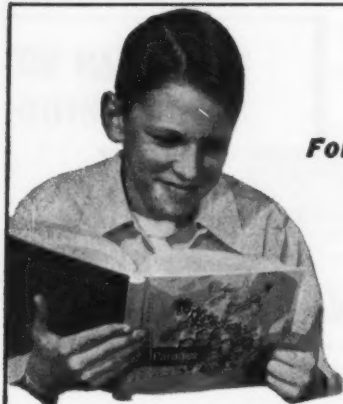
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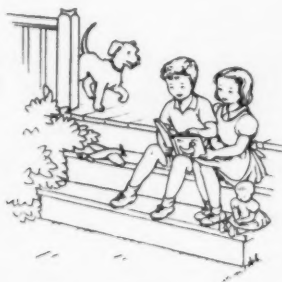
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